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THE TRANSFIGURING

OF

THE CROSS.

THE TRANSFIGURING

OF

THE CROSS;

OR,

The Trial and Triumph of the Son of Man.

BY

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TO THE MEMBERS

OF

The First Presbyterian Congregation of Troy,

WHOSE LOVE AND SYMPATHY FOR TEN YEARS PAST HAS BEEN
UNFAILING AND CONSTANT, AND HAS THUS MADE
MY MINISTRY AMONG THEM AN EVER
INCREASING JOY,

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THIS volume contains a selection from a series of sermons on the Fourth Gospel. They deal with the events recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of that Gospel, and are intended to present the facts with such explanation as belongs mainly to the time of their action. Subjective influences may have in part ruled me, but I have endeavored to be true to the environment of the history. The sermons therefore illustrate my idea of expository preaching, though they are far from my ideal.

In their preparation I acknowledge the general help I have received from many sources, but in particular the help that has come from the fine attention and kind appreciation of my people.

For their sake I would have revised them, and thus avoided some repetition of thought; but I have yielded to the request to "give them as I gave them."

T. P. S.

JUNE 17, 1896.

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I.

WHEN HOPE WAS DARKEST.

He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. — Isaiah liii. 11.

As sorrowful yet always rejoicing. — 2 Cor. vi. 10.

Wherefore did the Lord so often break off that prayer of his which was of such mighty consequence? In my opinion it was to teach us that our prayers are most perfect when intermixed with an anxious concern for the welfare of our neighbors. — Isid., *Clarius.*

And who can say that it is not a glorious thing that a thought so divine as that of Christ, the Man of sorrows and the stricken lamb of God, should altogether penetrate the spirit of so many centuries, and be borne to the inmost heart of the poorest peasant, and everywhere turn the moans of anxiety and anguish into a plaint of heavenly music? — Martineau, in *Hours of Thought.*

I.

WHEN HOPE WAS DARKEST.

When Jesus had spoken these words he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron where was a garden into which he entered and his disciples. — JOHN xviii. 1.

THE Fourth Gospel gives no account of the agony of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. It simply mentions the place as the scene of the betrayal and arrest. Various reasons have been suggested for this omission. Some tell us that the author of these memorabilia only intended to supplement the record of the other three gospels; but this reason is unsatisfactory, because many things are repeated in this gospel which are reported in the others. The Fourth Gospel, although written much later than the others, is neither a supplement nor an appendix, but is an independent composition, making omissions, and containing repetitions and additions, in accordance with the plan of its construction.

Again, some make bold to affirm that the author did not know of this incident, but the in-

timate knowledge which he displays of the whole life and thought of Jesus forbids such an assumption. Others account for the omission on the ground that inasmuch as it is the purpose of this gospel to set forth the divinity of our Lord, such a scene of sorrow, suffering, and shrinking fear as is portrayed by the other gospel historians would be inconsistent with this purpose; but the answer to this is, that these memorabilia are quite as explicit in their recognition of the full and true humanity of our Lord as the other records. It is enough on this point to refer to the silent assent of Jesus himself to the question of the Jews, "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" and to his own affirmation, "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am." We might also add that this gospel gives us a very definite anticipation of the sufferings in the garden in connection with the visit of certain Greeks to the temple. With some prevision of the coming disaster to himself, Jesus says, "Now is my soul troubled." The expression is intensive, and indicates that he was stirred to the very depths of his being by the circumstances which then pointed to his death. The man who reported this saying would certainly find no logical difficulty in giving an account of the suffering in Gethsemane if he

wished to do so. We are therefore left in the dark, I think, as to the reason of the omission, unless we may suppose that the author was governed by sentimental considerations. These surely may have great weight, for no one of a sensitive nature can even read the story of the agony in the garden without feeling that it is almost too sacred for analysis, or even description. That the beloved disciple should draw a veil over it, from personal considerations, is not altogether strange. The reason then for the omission was in his heart and not in his mind. He simply could not speak of it. It forms, however, an essential part of the biography of Jesus, and if only we look at it with a reverent sympathy, we may derive some spiritual benefit from its consideration. I shall therefore endeavor to present this incident of the suffering of our Lord in Gethsemane in accordance with the light shed upon it by the facts so far as we know them in the life of the historic Jesus. In this examination the Fourth Gospel is as essential as the others, for whatever may have been the reason for the omission of the incident, we have here its environment, and its psychological setting. Its authenticity is thus emphasized.

Following then the order in the record before us, we find Jesus going forth with his disciples to

the garden situated on the slope of Mount Olivet, after he had uttered a most significant prayer in his own behalf and theirs. In this prayer he had risen to a state of spiritual exaltation. The talk about the table had gradually led up to it, but in the subsequent prayer there is an expansion of thought and an uplifting of the soul beyond any previous experience. In this prayer Jesus becomes conscious of his own glorification. He sees all his past life and all its future influence in the perfect tense. "I have finished," he says, "the work thou gavest me to do." This sense of the completeness of his labor is not marred by any thought of failure. The immediate and present ineffectiveness of his life is hidden in the light of its permanent and eternal results. Like a man in a dream he surmounts impossible obstacles with ease and celerity. In this ecstatic state all fear disappears. The Father is near him, and is one with him, as he is one with the Father. Then he rises into a still higher mood, and makes his union with the Father the standard of the measure of the union of the disciples with himself and with his Father. Listen to the extraordinary words: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." But this union is no merely theoretical affair. It has a practical end and aim. It com-

prehends participation in this glory with equal shares, first as beholding it, and second as receiving it. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." We can understand this. We find no difficulty in believing that the time may come when our eyes shall behold the glory of the Lord, for by this we mean the triumph of righteousness in the world, and the acknowledgment of the reign of the kingdom of heaven when mercy and truth shall meet together and righteousness and peace shall kiss each other. But when Jesus goes on to say, "And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one as we are one," we stop short, for we think that he cannot quite mean it. So we say, "This cannot be; it takes Jesus out of his unique position as the Son of God, and opens to all his disciples ultimate equality of sonship." Then we try to draw a line between what we call his communicable glory and that which is incommunicable. We say that it is possible perhaps for us to receive that which was *given* to him, but not that which is his *inherently;* or that which is *morally* his may be ours, but not that which is his *essentially.* But Jesus evidently did not think of such distinctions. The explanation of his lan-

guage is to be found in his emotions, and not in his intellect. Only a soul in the highest condition of rapture could utter such expressions as these. They do not belong to ordinary speech. We may believe that in this hour of prayer his joy was literally full. He saw himself as it were in the day of his coronation. All his crown rights were conceded, and his spiritual vision took in the establishment of his kingdom from the sea to the uttermost parts of the earth. This exaltation of spirit continues to the end of the prayer, and causes him to conclude with an unqualified assurance in the eternity of the divine love. It is impossible for us to measure the depth of inspiration or the height of aspiration displayed by this prayer. We feel in reading it like those who have looked upon the stupendous and the sublime in nature, and who realize how imperfect any description of the grandeur must be. The language here defies analysis, and cannot be put into the fetters of logic. It is the language of feeling, the utterance of a soul that is filled with the thrill of a divine harmony, and the joy of a perfect completeness in a righteous life. But the prayer ended, Jesus goes forth with his disciples. They are now in the streets of the city. The midnight hour approaches, and the people are leaving the temple

in throngs ere the gates are closed. The sight of the crowd, and the noisy confusion attendant upon it, recalls the occasion of the gathering, and brings to his mind the knowledge of that peril which had been obliterated in the enthusiasm of his prayer. Now for the first time a wave of troubled agitation sweeps over him. The disciples, keenly on the watch, discern the change, and instinctively gather closer about him; but in response to this action he tells them that they will "all be offended in him this night," for it is written, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." To this Peter replies, "Though all should be offended, yet will not I." But Jesus, knowing well the character of the impetuous apostle, answers, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thou fail not; and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren."

But Peter still presses his claim of self-sacrifice, and replies with redoubled earnestness, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and unto death." It is thus that Peter makes plain the kind of peril which he supposes Jesus fears, and which he is willing to share. But it is one thing to make a boast when danger is somewhat distant, and quite another to fulfil it when it is

at hand. So as Peter has made specific the danger he will bravely face, Jesus is explicit in telling him the very way he will prove faithless. The prediction is all the more emphatic, because he had made the same a few hours before. "I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before thou hast denied that thou knowest me." Turning now to all the disciples, and reverting to the thought of their being scattered, he endeavors to prepare them for this trial. So he says to them, "When I sent you without purse, or scrip, or sandals, lacked ye anything?" They answered, "Nothing!" "But now," he continues, "he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip, and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."

This seems contradictory to previous exhortations to non-resistance, and to putting away all anxiety regarding the future; but Jesus undoubtedly refers here to the necessity of preparing for spiritual defence against evil aggression. It is as if he had said, "Be ready for any emergency which may arise. Your faith and courage will be sorely tried, and hence I warn you not to be caught unprepared. There may come a time when the policy of non-resistance will be detrimental to my kingdom; then you must fight. I

lay down no rule which must be blindly followed, but I give you principles of action for guidance." The disciples, however, did not so understand him. They evidently thought that he was counselling them to arm themselves at this time with material weapons, and hence they replied, "Lord, here are two swords." Jesus, in despair of their right conception of his words, replies with a mingling of pity and sarcasm, "It is enough!" Certainly, of that kind of sword, and with such men to handle it, two were enough, and more than enough.

They now entered the garden. This was probably an enclosed place on the side or near the foot of the Mount of Olives, occupied by trees whose dense shade hid them from the sight of passers by. We are told that it was an accustomed retreat of Jesus and his disciples, and therefore a place well known to Judas, who was now absent, consummating his plans for the betrayal. As Jesus entered the familiar spot, the agitation which had gradually taken hold upon him during his walk thither now overwhelmed him, and he passed at once from his high state of exaltation to the very depths of humiliation and passionate sorrow. There are some who do not regard this as credible, and hence they deny the truth of the record which reports it; but I

think we need go no further than our own experience for a verification of its reality.

It is possible for us to talk calmly and rationally of a great sorrow which has broken our hearts; we can even rise to heights of resignation from the depth of submission, and viewing by faith the end of our discipline, we can rejoice with joy unspeakable; but we can do this only when, in some way, our grief is for the time removed. When an angel of sympathy strengthens us, we are quiet, because our attention is drawn away from ourselves, or because we are put into another environment. But while we are face to face with the outward, physical fact of our grief; when we realize for the first time that it is the last time; when we pass out of the door, and it is shut and locked behind us; when an absolute change takes place, and the routine in which we have lived and moved with satisfaction of soul is broken, and we know that it can never again be resumed, — then human nature will assert itself, and we fling away all restraint, and suffer the passion of our grief to swell in torrents, and spend itself freely, lest by impeding it we perish utterly. But even then we may pass suddenly into a quiet state, just as a mountain stream wildly rushing down over rocks falls into a pool as calm and clear

as the unclouded sky which it reflects. The experience of sudden extremes of joy and woe is not uncommon in this human life of ours. The mountain and the valley, and not the plain, tell the story of the most of us.

I venture to say then that the sudden fall of the spiritual temperature of Jesus is no mystery, neither is it illogical, as some would have us believe who would fain throw doubt on the authenticity of the narrative. It is fairly though not wholly explained by a change of environment. When he entered that garden he knew it was for the last time. If you ask why he went there, knowing that it was the place where he would be betrayed, our only answer is that while Jesus never sought, he never avoided danger. He had but one way in which to go, and that was the way of duty, the whither of his Father's will. But now this old familiar place, made sacred by the gathering of friends, was about to be desecrated by a most infamous betrayal. An enemy was even now seeking the trysting-place of love. The thought of that betrayal, and its consequences to himself and to his friends, is more than he can endure. He feels that he must be alone, yet not wholly alone. With hurried speech, as one speaks whose voice is paralyzed by excess of inward feeling, he bids the disciples sit

down and wait for him, while he takes the three with whom he is the most intimate, and retreats to another part of the garden. Then he leaves these three, and bidding them watch, goes away about a stone's throw. The Paschal moon, now at its zenith, shining through the dense foliage, casts its scattered light upon him, and enables these three to witness in part the awful struggle and terrible agony which possesses him. They hear a single sentence of the supplication which bursts from his agonized soul. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," and again, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but as thou wilt." So much these disciples saw and heard; but not more, for their eyes were heavy with sleep, and their minds dull by reason of the long continued stress of attention demanded of them since their early assembling. And now a strange thing happens, and yet it is not altogether inexplicable. In the midst of his prayer, and while as yet no alleviation of his terrible suffering has been vouchsafed to him, he goes back to these three disciples. Instead of continuing his supplication and having it all out with God at once, he returns to these friends, as if he could no longer endure the strain of distress alone. I think there is nothing more

pathetic in all the life of our Lord than this turning again and again to these men, seeking to find in human friendship that which for the time he could not get from the divine communion. I say this with some hesitation, and yet there are experiences of our own which testify to its truth. There have been times, at least with some of us, when we yearned for a more visible and substantial manifestation of protection and comfort than could be gained in a purely spiritual communion. The everlasting arms seem to be the most everlasting when they are veritable arms of flesh. The living voice, the actual hand-grasp, the tender touch, the loving kiss, are things for which there is no substitute in solitary strife and anguish of soul. This grows out of the sociological fact that humanity is the unit of a union. This union is not only spiritual but federal. As members of one another we must come into touch with each other. Like must seek like. Revelation must be from the greater to the less in terms of the less. There is a fine illustration of this in the words which Browning puts into the mouth of David, in his poem on Saul: —

> "O Saul, it shall be
> A Face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me
> Thou shalt love and be loved by forever; a Hand like to this hand,
> Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!"

Admitting all the mystery involved here, admitting too the mystical nature of the idea, I nevertheless think that Jesus was eternally true to the highest instincts of his spiritual life, when he retreated from his solitary conflict and suffering, and hastened to the side of the men whom he had taken with him as watchers and protectors during his terrible trial. You may say that he leaned upon what proved to be a broken reed; but it was better than none, and this much comfort he gained from it, that he saw the willingness of the spirit beneath the weakness of the flesh. The fact that he repeatedly sought this human aid shows that he did not regard the sleep of the disciples as indifference or disloyalty, but rather as an involuntary weakness. I find no reproach even for their conduct, unless there may be a little in the emphasis placed on the pronouns in the question addressed to Peter. "Simon, sleepest *thou?* couldst not *thou* watch one hour?" To Peter this question might have reminded him of his boast; and yet I doubt not our Lord excused him as well as the others, for he knew the inner heart of Peter, and his real loyalty in spite of his superficial excitability. To him as to the others he said on coming to them the third time, "Sleep on now and take your rest; it is enough; the hour of betrayal is

come." That is, "You have done all you can do. The last hope is fled; the way of the cross is inevitable. The Father's will, not mine, must be done."

Some deep questions now present themselves for solution. What was the cause of this agony? Why was it not borne with heroic fortitude? If Jesus were destined to drink the bitter cup, why did he pray that it might be taken away?

We must look for the answer to the first question in the facts of the life of Jesus, and not in subsequent theological assumptions. The answer which mediævalism makes, and which is adopted and emphasized in the latest cloisters of scholasticism, may be summed up in words that are quite fresh from the press. "Identifying himself with sin, he must feel its very farthest consequence, — the awful solitude, and the unutterable anguish, of a soul now bereft of hope, and forsaken of God. In the heathen fable, Orpheus goes down, lyre in hand, to the Plutonic realm, to bring back again to life and love the lost Eurydice; but Jesus, in his vicarious sufferings, goes down to hell itself, that he may win back from their sins, and bear in triumph to the upper heavens, a lost humanity." [1] The assumption on which such

[1] Exp. Bible, Luke, p. 371, ff.

a theory as this is based is contrary to the whole tenor, and opposed to every fact in the life of our Lord. Did he identify himself with sin? Never! With sinners he indeed identified himself, but not with sin. He was the sinless one. How then could he feel the consequence of that which had no antecedent in him? Was his soul bereft of hope? Then he was utterly hopeless; and if that happened even once then what confidence could men have in his invitation: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Did he feel himself forsaken of God? Then faith died within him, and his word, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me," is but the idle song of an empty day. The further expression in this theory that "Jesus went down into hell itself," if it involves the least idea of punitive suffering, — and the intensive pronoun "*itself*" seems to imply this, — is false to the righteousness of God, and contrary to universally acknowledged ethical principles. Punishment must be subsequent to sin, and nothing but sin can be its antecedent. If it be true that Jesus lost his faith in God, then he was a sinner as we are; but in that case what becomes of his conscious unbroken filial life? We admit that he "was numbered with the transgressors," but he was not one

of them. "He was wounded on account of our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities;" but he was not punished for these things, nor judged unrighteous because of our crimes. Any theory that makes him bear substitutionary penalties either makes him a sinner, or makes God unjust; and although it may be said that God's justice is not infringed because he bore these sufferings voluntarily, yet it must be evident to every one that even a willing submission to injustice cannot make injustice right. We must seek then for another answer to the question, Why he suffered. Without going into this question exhaustively, I think we may find a true and deep answer in the fact of his realizing that the ties which bound him to his earthly work must be broken. This involves his relation both to friends and enemies, and introduces two elements of bitterness into the cup he was called to drink. First, he must leave his disciples before his perfect work was done with them. They were still objects of anxious solicitude, for they were far from understanding him or his mission. What might he not do with them if he could have only a few years longer in which to instruct them! How many things he had to say which they could not now bear, and how many which they could bear, if only he

could say them! The second element of bitterness was the attitude of his fellow countrymen toward him. Worse than a serpent's tooth is the sin of ingratitude, and of this sin the Jews were guilty. They hated him without a cause. Here is reason for anguish. He loved them, and had made his life a sacrifice for them, and they despised that love, and mocked at all his efforts to do them good. There is no pain so great as that which love feels when it is met by scorn, and still continues to be love. If we realize this, there will be no need of constructing a theory of the sufferings of Jesus in Gethsemane. Think of him as entering that familiar spot, and looking upon it for the last time; think of him as he reflects upon the weakness of the disciples, and their need of him, which need can no longer be satisfied; think of him as the consciousness of a consummate ingratitude on the part of his own people breaks in upon his soul, and as he realizes their unwillingness to be saved by him, though they are upon the verge of an awful destruction; think of him in his yearning, enthusiastic, passionate desire to bring peace to the troubled, hope to the despairing, sight to the blind, and life to the dead, and with this desire recall the consciousness of his ability to save unto the uttermost all them that come to

him, — and then beside these thoughts place the cutting off of all these plans, and do you wonder that he prayed with agony of spirit that the cup might pass from him? If a gardener once said to the lord of the garden when he commanded him to cut down a fruitless tree, "Suffer it one year longer that I may dig about it," is there not reason enough that Jesus should ask for more time; and in the denial of that request is there not cause for anguish of soul, and sorrow like unto no other man's sorrow? What need is there of seeking for other reasons, and especially for reasons of a speculative nature, when these are so patent to our own experience? But why did not Jesus meet this suffering with heroic fortitude? Why did he not talk calmly about it, as Socrates did about his death, or as hundreds of martyrs have done? It is sufficient in answer to this to say that mental and spiritual suffering is not subject to the same law that physical suffering is. When it came to the crucifixion, Jesus met it with as much fortitude as Socrates did in taking the hemlock cup, although it was much more painful. In the garden his agony is proof of his agony. To have been calm there, would have shown insensibility. Sympathy and love are deep in proportion to their sensitiveness. Jesus suffered

because he could suffer, because he was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and tried in all points to which humanity is susceptible.

The question why he prayed that the bitter cup might be taken away since he knew that he was destined to drink it, is more difficult than the others, but is not without a rational answer. If Jesus really faltered; if he lost sight for one moment of the goal towards which he was pressing; if he put his own will against the will of the Father, and prayed that he might be spared the suffering on account of the weakness of the flesh; if he retracted his vows of resignation and renunciation; if in any way he weakened in regard to the one purpose of his life, — then we shall have to admit that he failed in the hour of trial; and that admission is fatal to his claims as a Saviour and Redeemer. But I think that the true state of the case is that all this was presented to him as a possibility. Two ways were actually open to him; and the way of escape from present and future suffering was the wider and the easier and the more attractive. For a moment then, in the extremity of his fear and his need, he prayed that the cup might pass; and yet there was no thought of refusing it. The prayer was not occasioned by feeling that the wrath of God was upon him, but the very oppo-

site. So conscious was he of the divine love, so certain that God was his Father, so sure of the infinite wisdom, that he had confidence to reason with God, and even appeal to him, to avert the coming blow, if it were in accordance, or could be made to be in accordance, with the divine plan. The plan itself he did not question, whatever it might be. In one word, he was here, as in all other circumstances, fully determined not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. Hence his prayer did not turn upon the relation of the plan to himself, but only upon its relation to the heart of the Father. When he perceived that it was God's will that he should take the dolorous way, and that there was really no other way, then in the full trust of love and obedience, he uttered the final word, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, Thy will be done."

I have thus attempted to bring before you this scene of the agony in the garden, so that its truth might be clearly discerned. I would have you see that while it surpasses our human experience in extent and in depth, it does not show itself to be different in kind. In that hour of exceeding sorrow there was nothing which separated our Elder Brother from ourselves. Here,

as well as elsewhere, he showed himself our friend, our helper, and our example. If, in the bitterness of his most bitter woe, he did not lose the consciousness of the divine love, but was able to say, "Thy will be done," we also may know that whatever be the sorrow that afflicts us, and however deep the wounds that torture us, the heart of God is warm and tender, and His will is the way of our highest destiny. It may involve a cross; but it will evolve a crown. It may bring us to the hour when hope is darkest, but even in that hour Love will stand upon the threshold; and though we have wept all the night, joy cometh in the morning. Gethsemane is dark, Calvary is dark, and the tomb is dark; but their darkness cannot hide the Light of Life, which is the Life of the World, which is Eternal, Unchanging Love. It is thus that the mystery of pain becomes the revelation of wisdom and the way to victory and peace. We may be sure that the prayer uttered by Jesus for his own glorification, and that uttered by him in the extremity of his anguish for the passing of the cup were both inspired by the same faith; and the answer to each alike contributed to the perfection of his own soul, and enabled him to go on to the possession of that joy which no man could take from him. We may be equally sure

that if we follow in his footsteps there will be given unto us strength to endure, and vigor to press on, however difficult the way, and at the last to find success in life even where it seems to fail.

II.

JESUS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. — *Isaiah.*

They [the Jews] must carry up their malignant cause to a tribunal under whose oppression they were subdued, whose presence was the persistent witness to their subjection, and appeal to a pagan governor whom they hated and despised. Only one thing they dreaded more, — to yield themselves to the prophet of Nazareth, whose claims they could not disprove, whose influence they could not resist. Men have humbled themselves to be exalted; they humbled themselves to be debased. — Alexander McKenzie, in *Christ Himself.*

It deserves notice that the special sin with which the house of Annas is charged is that of "whispering," or hissing like vipers, which seems to refer to private influence on the judges in their administration of justice, whereby morals were corrupted, judgment perverted, and the Shekinah withdrawn from Israel. — Edersheim, in *The High Priests and their Families.*

II.

JESUS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED.

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him and led him away to Annas first. — JOHN xviii. 12, 13.

THE incidents belonging to the arrest and preliminary trial of Jesus are significant mainly because of the result that has proceeded from them.

Thousands of men have perished through the treachery of pretended friends and the vindictiveness of irrational enemies, and their story has been written by authors of established renown; but the world has paid little heed to the record, and comparatively little good or evil has grown out of the deed. You may count up the martyrs from righteous Abel to Zecharias, or from Socrates to John the Baptist, or from Paul to Abraham Lincoln, and no one of them, nor all of them together, has commanded such attention from the world as this Jesus who suffered under Pontius Pilate. He alone has transcended the limits of race and nation and time, and become a cos-

mopolitan moral ideal. Alone of all men he claimed the world as his inheritance; and alone of all men have his followers endeavored to make the world the area of his kingdom. We say nothing now as to the actual success of this claim; you may regard it as visionary, futile, and impossible of fulfilment; but if it be all a dream, certainly no such splendid dream has ever proceeded from any other source. Paul's magnificent assumption has never been equalled in boldness, whatever may be the truth concerning it: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead; for as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive." In some way this assumption has become the firm belief of a vast number of men in all ages and among all races where it has been proclaimed. It is to-day the faith of the largest civilization and the profoundest culture to which this world has attained. It is of some importance, then, that we follow step by step, so far as we can, the course of Jesus as he went on his dolorous way to the cross. The slightest detail which can be verified will be of value to us either in removing obstacles to a reasonable faith, or in confirming us in the truth.

We have already considered the experience of Jesus when he first entered the garden of Geth-

semane. Then and there he was overwhelmed, yet not utterly cast down. From the beginning he had put himself into the Father's hands; he accepted without reserve the work which God had given him to do; he believed implicitly in the divine omnipotence; and therefore he could not regard himself as under the dominion of fate. "All things," he said, "are possible unto thee." But deeper than any other feeling was the consciousness of his Father's love. He knew that he was the well-beloved son, and that an unchanging God would never entertain wrath toward him. Hence his prayer that the cup of suffering might pass from him, if this were in accordance with the divine will. But this suffering had been made inevitable by the free act of the people in rejecting him who had come as their Saviour. To avert it, it would be necessary to perform a miracle which would have taken from him the whole merit of salvation. Removing the cup involved another way. Hence the submissive cry in the very depths of his agony: "Not my will, but thine be done." The passion and the pathos of this suffering is especially emphasized in the repeated turning to the disciples whom he had left to watch with him. Overcome by weariness, and failing to fully sympathize with their Master, and wholly uncon-

scious of the real and near peril which awaited him, they fell asleep; and in spite of frequent arousings, could not overcome their heaviness. Physical weakness had enervated their will, though it had not touched their spirit in its affectional nature. They were faithful in heart, but their faithfulness was not stimulated to action. They therefore missed the exalted privilege of sharing with their Master the trial to which he was subjected, and the victory which he won. He trod the winepress alone, and alone did he accomplish his triumph. When for the last time he went to his disciples, it was not to ask them again to watch with him, but to tell them that the need had passed. His prayer had been heard; and he saw the way of his destiny coinciding with the way of his duty, and that with the way of a willing obedience. He was prepared now for whatever might come. So he said to his disciples, "It is enough; sleep on now and take your rest." Evidently he thought that some time would intervene ere he would be arrested. Presently, the disciples, refreshed in body, would awake, and then they would be prepared to stand by him in the events that were hastening on; but no such time was given. Scarcely had he spoken the quieting and comforting words than he hears the noise of an

approaching band. There is a gleam of glittering spears and a sound of clanking swords and clattering staves. The band widens out as it comes up the slope of Olivet, and men run here and there with lighted torches, peering beneath the dense shade of the trees, where the light of the moon fails. There is no time now for sleep: and Jesus' word of warning is spoken none too soon: "Rise up, let us be going! He that betrayeth me is at hand." This may mean either that they must retreat and escape if they can, or that they must go forward and meet the impending crisis. It is possible that one thought followed the other in quick succession, the first being prompted by Jesus' anxiety to save his disciples, and the second by his own resolution to face the peril which now threatened. But if any intention of escape was in the mind of Jesus it was quickly rendered futile by the act of Judas. It is he who leads the band; and on discovering Jesus, he at once steps forth, and greeting the Master with accustomed words of welcome, kisses him with pretended tenderness. Just how Jesus met this infamous transaction we cannot tell. The earliest record makes no mention of any reply, while the latest omits the incident altogether. According to Matthew, Jesus responds with a question

which is the utterance of a man heart-broken at this shameful expression of treachery, and yet holding on to his love, and trusting still to its redemptive power: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" If Jesus indeed said this, and certainly it is like him, we may see both in the words and the tone in which they were uttered, the reason for that remorse which came upon the traitor, and which found its only possible outcome in suicide. According to Luke, the reply of Jesus was, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" The indignation of this expression and its formal self-consciousness is not in keeping with the character of Jesus, and we cannot therefore believe it to be other than a tradition. It may have been spoken by a disciple, possibly by Peter, and in a later time attributed to Jesus as a natural utterance; but it is not like him, as the other saying is. We cannot now enter into a discussion of this act of Judas; but it is perhaps well to say in passing that there is not the slightest evidence that Judas expected that the betrayal would end in the death of Jesus. He did not mean to have it go so far. The sin of Judas, in its beginning and in its intention, was a very small ordinary sin. The devil that was in him was no terrible monster arousing horror and calling for fierce male-

diction such as is contained in the 109th Psalm. If this Psalm be a prophetic description and denunciation of the traitor, it is certainly an exaggeration. The betrayal gets its motive and its impulse from a small-minded jealousy which blinded the mind of Judas to the consequences of his act. In the forefront of his crime, and leading directly to all its terrible results, is the common and every-day sin of thoughtlessness. When he offered to deliver Jesus, he did not think out his proposition to its end. If those scheming, wily priests and Pharisees had said to him, "We intend to crucify your master; and if we get him into our hands we will do it;" and if he had believed that it would be done, neither thirty pieces, nor three thousand pieces of silver would have bought him. In our determination to place Judas among the exceptional criminals of history we magnify his crime, and forget that in the self-estimation of all the disciples he was no worse than any of them. We forget, too, how seldom great hatreds come from great wrongs, and how frequently they come from little ones. The "bacillus of treason" may be conveyed to fruitful soil by a look, or even by a simple not-looking. It produces an incurable disease all the same; and the terrible thing about this is that the disease denies itself to the end. This was

the reason Judas did not see the result of his act. He did not believe himself to be infected with treason. He was anxious only to satisfy that little spite of his, and to reach by a quicker method than honest dealing his ultimate purpose. But when he saw the result, it was more than he could bear. As he flung himself to death, his last words might have been, "I did n't mean to do it." But he did it; and from that day to this the name of Judas Iscariot is detested and loathed of men. It is the symbol of abysmal vileness.

When the Master had been pointed out, the officers at once stepped forward to arrest him. The disciples, however, made some resistance, but Jesus commanded them to desist. Without heeding this, one of them drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest, who was standing near. This action seems to have put all the disciples in peril; but Jesus drew attention to himself by demanding, "Whom seek ye?" They answer, "Jesus of Nazareth." He replied, "I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." The answer was sufficient; for they had orders to take him only. They therefore bound him and led him away, while the disciples all forsook him and fled.

According to the Fourth Gospel Jesus was now

led to the palace of Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas, the high priest. The other gospels make no mention of this, but it is probably a real historical addition to the facts of the trial. It must be conceded that there was no certainty of the arrest of Jesus that night. Time and time again the chief priests had made arrangements to assassinate him, but they had failed. He had been forewarned by his friends, or had exercised his own ingenuity, and so had escaped. These failures compelled another plan of action. Caiaphas, with great political sagacity, had demonstrated to them that it would be against public policy to murder him; but if they could cause his arrest and conviction by Roman authority, it would be for the saving of the nation. Into this scheme they readily fell, but they could not have carried it out had not Judas assisted them. From the time he left the table in the room where they had celebrated the Passover, two hours had elapsed. They were not sure, therefore, whether Jesus could be readily found. If he were found at once he could not be immediately tried, because the Sanhedrin, or high court, did not assemble till morning; and as the next day was a feast day, it was important to hurry up the trial, and get the approval and endorsement of the Roman governor, together with the

sentence for execution, before the people from the provinces, and especially from Galilee, should hear of it. They were sure to be in the city in great numbers, and it was well known that he had many friends in the country who might possibly come to his rescue. A preliminary examination, therefore, would expedite matters. Annas accordingly held himself in readiness to enter upon the hearing if Jesus were brought before him. The capture was successful, and Jesus was informally arraigned before Annas. Around him stood the partisans of the high priest, but he himself was without advocate or friend. Instead of acquainting him with the cause of his arrest, and preferring charges, Annas began by demanding of him who his disciples were, and what was the character of his teaching. This was inquisition, not examination. It was an act of lawless tyranny. Both these questions assumed that Jesus was the head of a secret society whose teachings and practices were illegal and revolutionary. Jesus at once exposed the absurdity of the question and the stupidity of the questioner, by appealing to undisputed facts. He declared that he had done nothing and taught nothing in secret; his place of instruction had been in the Temple, where Jews were accustomed to resort; if Annas would know the character of this teach-

ing, let him summon witnesses, for there were plenty of them. This straightforward answer was somewhat confusing to the self-appointed judge, and he doubtless showed his humiliation, for one of his servants who stood by, with evident intent to vindicate his superior, struck Jesus a brutal blow in the face, at the same time asking, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" Such an insult demanded a proper reply, not only for the sake of Jesus himself, but for the sake of law thus outraged in the presence of one of its judges. If Jesus had intended that his instruction in the Sermon on the Mount should be literally and always strictly construed, this was the time for him to turn the other cheek; but instead of thus submitting to the brutal insolence of a servant, he repelled the act with great dignity and quiet force. Turning to his assailant he said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me?" This was a vigorous answer. It shows that the spirit of the man was not cowed by his misfortunes. Beneath all external humiliation he carried a kingly heart. The prisoner was still a man.

Jesus does not often speak in this way, but he does it with sufficient frequency to serve as a corrective to that slavish literalness which is

the criterion of many readers of the Bible. If sometimes the statement is made that Jesus was an Oriental, and used language in accordance with the customs of the East, straightway there is a remonstrance, and we are told that this is a scheme of those who wish to eliminate some truth from the Bible, or to weaken some precious doctrine, and so make way for a denial of the Bible altogether. Jesus, it is said, meant exactly what he said, and you must believe what he said, or deny him utterly. But if men are wise they will not suffer themselves to be driven to such an alternative, for in reality this lowers the criterion from the sayings of Jesus or the declarations of the Bible to the opinions of a man concerning these sayings. More than all this, there is something better than the words of Jesus, and that is his life. His conduct interprets the Sermon on the Mount much better than lexicon and grammar. The lexicon and grammar set forth the doctrine of non-resistance without any exception. Read in their light only, the doctrine is absolute and imperative. The *conduct* of Jesus shows us that there are times when revilings and insults are to be resented, and when the sword is to be unsheathed and sharpened for the destruction of the oppressor. Jesus as the captain of our salvation is no less our example

as a warrior, than as a suffering victim is he our example in humility and self-sacrificing love. His life, therefore, is not only the interpreter of his doctrine, but it makes his doctrine. Neither non-resistance nor resistance can be called absolutely his doctrine, but acting in accordance with circumstances in so far as this does not involve or imply disloyalty to truth. And so the final question concerning all that is recorded about Jesus, or in fact all that is written in the Bible, is What is its outcome in life? or, What expression does it demand in conduct? The force of the bold answer given to Annas, and of the firm and indignant reply to the impudent and insulting assailant of his person, is seen in the sudden cessation of the examination. It was scarcely prudent to trifle with a prisoner who knew so well his own rights, and had so much courage in defending them. Already compromised by a disgraceful scene, Annas would not venture further, but as soon as possible sent Jesus bound to the high court of the nation, of which Caiaphas was the chief judge.

The morning hour was now approaching, but it was a great day in Jerusalem, and hence all were early astir. The entire court was there, and the trial of Jesus began without delay. It was conducted apparently in accord-

ance with the forms of law then in vogue. This was necessary because both prosecution and defence were obliged to carry every case in which the sentence of death was involved to the judgment seat of Roman authority; but although the trial was technically correct and in order, it was only a mockery. There was really no intention to bring out the facts on which the accusation was based. The court was made up of two parties, Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees did not want to hear a public repetition of what Jesus had said concerning them — this would have delighted the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not want to hear what Jesus had said about them — this would have delighted the Pharisees. Telling the whole truth would have changed the places of accused and accusers. Jesus would then have been the judge and the Sanhedrin the criminal. To avert this a temporary coalition was necessary. The Pharisees consented to overlook the brutality and cruelty and ambition of the Sadducees, and the Sadducees consented to ignore their contempt for the hypocrisy, double-dealing, and pious inanity of the Pharisees. The bond which united them was a common hatred of Jesus, and a positive antipathy to the righteousness which he said was the only condition of entrance to the king-

dom of heaven. This was the head and front of his offending, but they could not put that into the indictment. It was necessary, however, that a capital charge be brought against him, for they were determined on a capital conviction. This charge was blasphemy, and the penalty on conviction, death by stoning. Note now the order of the trial. The court is seated in a semicircle upon cushions placed upon the floor. Caiaphas the high priest occupies the middle place. Next to him on either side are the most honored judges. The prisoner stands bound before the high priest. On the right and left, at the extreme ends of the crescent, are the two clerks of the court, one to record the acquittal if the votes agree to it, the other to write the sentence of condemnation if the prisoner is convicted. The other officers of the court stand back of the prisoner, each performing his appointed duty. Two guard the accused; one calls the witnesses; others are bearers of cords and thongs and scourges, and other instruments which may be useful in executing the orders of the court.

The law provided a counsel for the defence, and permitted the accused to speak for himself, and also to summon witnesses in his own behalf. It made the presence of an accuser necessary, and also required that the consequences of per-

jury on the part of witnesses should be plainly declared before the testimony was given. But in this case most of these provisions were set aside. The chief judge is the accuser; witnesses for the prosecution are summoned, but they contradict each other. For awhile it seemed as if the whole case would fail for lack of any consistent evidence. The judges were in despair, for nothing as yet had been adduced which would warrant sentence of death or further prosecution before Pilate. At last one man was found who said that he heard Jesus say on one occasion, "I will destroy the temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another temple without hands." There were some who attempted to corroborate this testimony, but on examination were unable to agree as to just what Jesus did say; but the high priest, with simulated zeal for the holiness of the Temple, pretended to see in this testimony the evidence he wanted. Springing from his place he cried out to Jesus, "Answerest thou nothing to what these testify against thee?" But Jesus declined to answer. Had he spoken, it would have been to ears that could not hear. He had counselled his disciples not to cast pearls before swine, and that utterance concerning the Temple, which has in it a royal wealth of meaning, would, even with his

explanation of it, have been utterly beyond the appreciation of his enemies. Here the trial might legally have closed; but it was hardly safe to put the question of guilt to vote upon so flimsy and contradictory evidence as had been presented, especially in view of the silence of Jesus. Caiaphas therefore made one more move. He had in a sense measured the character of the prisoner. He knew that it would be impossible to draw from him any confession of guilt. No false charge could make him utter a word which might prejudice his case. He would remain silent, and lay the whole burden of proof upon his accusers; but if a false charge could be brought under the semblance of truth, and couched in such language that silence would imperil the honor of Jesus, and cast a cloud upon the motive and mission of his life, then a chance would offer itself for his conviction. Jesus was prepared to suffer any indignity that might be inflicted upon him personally, but he would not suffer the truth to be denied even by implication. Caiaphas, perceiving this temper of his prisoner, played upon this string. As if about to close the session, he demanded in a casual manner: "If thou art the Messiah, tell us!" To this Jesus replied: "If I tell you ye will not believe; and if I ask ye will not answer."

Quickly the high priest replied, indicating his willingness to accept the word of Jesus if made under oath. With solemn tone and distinct voice he made his second demand: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God!" To this solemn adjuration there was but one answer. In the face of it, Jesus must declare himself, or forever deny himself. So calmly, deliberately, with full consciousness of the result, he declares and affirms, and makes oath to the truth of the charge: "Thou hast said it;" and in order to enforce the message he adds, "Nevertheless I say unto you, henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The high priest, with all his Sadducean diplomacy, was not prepared for this answer. He knew well the language of the ancient prophets, and he believed in a coming Messiah whose throne should be as the throne of God, to whom the heavens and the earth would render obeisance, who should be crowned with glory, and whose countenance should be fairer than the sons of men when turned toward his friends, but terrible as an army with banners when turned against his enemies. With such a belief it was impossible for him to connect the Messiah with

such a forlorn and helpless man as now stood bound before him. There was no more pretence now in his behavior; but with genuine abhorrence, and perhaps with fear lest such an utterance of blasphemy from one who was so far from realizing the Messianic ideal should bring down the vengeance of heaven upon his beloved city, he rent his priestly robes, and baring his naked breast to the gaze of the court, he cried out in a voice loud and yet half muffled with fear and horror, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need have we of witnesses? Behold now ye heard the blasphemy! What think ye?"

That expressed his entire and genuine conviction. What had started in as a comedy of errors had suddenly changed to a tragedy. The stories of the false witnesses, their contradictions and tergiversations, were all forgotten in the unprecedented assumption of Jesus himself; and so forcible and terrible was the impression made by his confession, that, contrary to the rule, the court neither discussed the question nor cast a ballot. They declared him guilty by acclamation. With one voice they cried out, "He is deserving of death." The verdict of course is unreasonable, and we should set it aside; but it is well to remember that in some of our judgments against men who are perhaps idealists, and

are striving to make plain a larger conception of Christian truth, we may be as unreasonable in our verdicts as were these Jews who could not see in Jesus the fulfilment of their notions of Messianic prophecy. It has often been said that vice is the excess of virtue. Certain it is that religion, under the banner of which every man is supposed to be a faithful servant of God and man, oftentimes leads to practical atheism and the worst form of despotism. Some crimes have been committed in the name of Liberty, but in the name of Religion the roll of murdered innocents is beyond human computation. Yet it is not fair to lay all these crimes at the doors of liberty and religion. When liberty enchains, it ceases to be liberty; when it trespasses upon the rights of others, it becomes license, and so loses its characteristic virtue. When religion takes on the form of dogmatic utterance, it is no more religion but philosophy, good or bad; when it interprets inspiration it becomes theology, and it then loses its infallibility; when it puts on a ritual and is identified by its clothes, it is simply an order of fashion, a figure-head without a soul; when it expends itself in feelings and emotions, it is in danger of abdicating reason and losing its head. There can be, however, no religion without dogma, without a theology, without a ritual,

without feelings, emotions, and sincere, strong convictions; yet the ineffable essence and life of religion is not in any one or all these things. It is indeed so independent of them that it refuses to be identified by them. We may not be able positively to define it, but we can tell what it is not. So we can say, looking at this trial of Jesus, that it was not the religion of the Jews which condemned him, but a misapprehension and false application of that religion which judged him worthy of death. It was Judaism, not Religion, that condemned him. Furthermore, we can see how a strong conviction blindly followed does not save a man from guilt, notwithstanding the honesty of his decision. Some years ago a pessimistic philosopher flung out this caution to the scientific and religious world, "Verify your compass!" It was a warning well put, and to which men will do well to take due heed, whether their compass be a Bible or what they call the laws of Nature or the authority of a church.

There is a great trial going on to-day. Jesus no longer stands in visible form before the bar of Caiaphas, but he stands before the bar of your hearts. What do you think of him? Is he worthy of a crown or a cross? Will you be his counsel for defence against the malignity of a

world which hates him, or will you stand as prosecutor? The question is not whether you will advocate or contend against these or those opinions about him which are current in the theological world, but will you make his life your moral ideal, his commandments your law, his service your cheerful labor, his self-denial your example, his friendship the aspiration of your soul, his kingdom of heaven the goal of your attainment? Upon the decision of these questions depends your future course in life. What you will do and be in the home and away from home, in business, in politics, in love, and in war, depends upon how you vote in the secret room of your own souls on the attitude you will take toward Jesus before the world. For, or against; which? The ancient decision of those Jews in that early morning trial concerns you only so far as it sheds light upon the character of Jesus, but your decision here and now is of the greatest concern to you personally. It means a larger, ever widening productive life of good, or it means the gradual shrinking of the self to the dimensions of an isolated soul.

III.

THE TESTING OF SIMON PETER.

Such indeed was this look. It was a flash of fire which irradiated the eyes of the apostle, which forcibly revealed the knowledge of himself, which constrained him to give glory to God; which dissipated all his terrors, which calmed all his fears; which raised his drooping courage, which confirmed his feeble knees; which reanimated his expiring zeal. — From a Sermon on Peter, by James Saurin, *Minister at the Hague in* 1705.

I think that look of Christ might seem to say —
"Thou Peter! art thou then a common stone
Which I at last must break my heart upon,
For all God's charge to His high angels may
Guard my foot better? Did I yesterday
Wash thy feet, my beloved, that they should run
Quick to deny me 'neath the morning sun?
And do thy kisses like the rest betray?
The cock crows coldly. — Go, and manifest
A late contrition, but no bootless fear!
For when thy final need is dreariest,
Thou shalt not be denied as I am here —
My voice to God and angels shall attest,
Because I know this man, let him be clear!"

Mrs. Browning.

III.

THE TESTING OF SIMON PETER.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus and so did another disciple. — JOHN xviii. 15.

ONE of the principal incidents at the trial of Jesus before the Jewish court is the denial of his Lord by Peter. The story is told by the four evangelists with great unanimity as to the main fact, but with such diversity of detail that a complete harmony is impossible. To those who look upon the sacred writings as the direct and immediate revelation of God this diversity has occasioned no little trouble, and various expedients have been tried by which to reconcile absolute inerrancy with the facts of different records. The most common argument is that if we certainly knew all the facts connected with a given incident, there would be no discrepancy in the account, — a very obvious truism, but wholly inapplicable to the assumption of a perfect and complete revelation. If the revelation be complete, what need of calling in certain unknown things or making hypotheses to reconcile it? Or

if they could be discovered and it was found that *they* cleared away the discrepancies, then we should have the strange anomaly of uninspired facts giving credence to inspiration, or the less truth proving the greater.

A more rational theory of Scripture avoids all this difficulty, without in the least impairing its credibility or marring its inspiration. We simply affirm what is universally acknowledged, — that while words are essential as a medium of conveying the truth, no truth is bound to any one form of words. No witness sees or hears precisely the same things as another witness. The difference is oftentimes the best evidence of the substantial truth of what they report. When the evidence is all in, the variations often make a harmonious whole. The real peril to Scripture comes from a practical refusal to acknowledge that its record of revelation comes under the same criterion of judgment as any other literature. If we assume that it is supernatural and transcendent, we have no way of proving it, and no way of bringing it into vital relation with our human life. If it be of another *kind* we cannot assimilate it. If, however, it be a message to men, it must come in the form and in the terms which are adapted to men. Placed here, it has a foundation which nothing can

shake. The truth becomes communicable, and therefore inspiring as well as inspired.

Now this story of Peter's denial illustrates the need of a rational theory of Scripture, that is, a theory which permits it to be judged as other literature is judged; and I will endeavor to present it so that you may see how the truth is brought out and maintained, notwithstanding the divergencies in the narration. Then we shall be able, I think, to make a fair estimate of the act of Peter, and give it the place it logically occupies in the trial of Jesus.

All the accounts agree that the scene took place in the court of the palace of Caiaphas. This court was a quadrangle enclosed by the palace, entrance to which was afforded by a passage from the street. The passage was guarded by a gate kept by a servant who was stationed there for the purpose. At the time of the arrest of Jesus all the disciples forsook him and fled. During the preliminary examination before Annas two of them recovered somewhat from their fear, and when Jesus was sent bound to Caiaphas they appeared on the scene. Three of the reports, however, mention only Peter. They tell us that he was within the court warming himself by the fire, and that a maid servant charged him with having been with Jesus. To this he replies in

various terms. One report affirms that he said, "I know not what thou sayest;" another, "I know not neither understand what thou sayest;" another "Woman, I know him not." The Fourth Gospel tells us that one disciple, who was acquainted with the high priest, went in with Jesus to the court. Soon afterwards he learned that Peter was outside the gate, and he went and spoke to the maid that kept the gate and obtained permission to bring in his friend. As Peter passed through the gate the servant asked: "Art thou not one of this man's disciples?" and Peter replied, "I am not."

This is the first denial, and the report varies all the way from an evasion which contained a half truth to a direct answer which was wholly a lie.

In the second scene two of the reporters tell us that a woman again charged him with being one of the disciples. In one case he denies with an oath, and in the other with a simple affirmation in the negative. Another reporter tells us that it was a man who charged him with being a disciple, and still another affirms that it was a general charge made by many. This is the second denial; and the variation is in the sex of those who made the charge, and in the varying degree of forceful language with which the charge was repelled.

In the third scene, two reporters say that the charge was general, and made by several persons, and urged on account of his speech as a Galilæan, and to this he replies with cursing and swearing. A third reporter tells us that it was a man who made this accusation, and a fourth tells us that this man was a servant of the man whose ear Peter had cut off while in the garden; but neither of these latter reports makes any mention of the vehement language used by Peter.

In conclusion, only one of the narratives speaks of the cock as crowing a second time, while all mention it at the third denial. Three narratives give an account of Peter's repentance with weeping, and one says nothing about it. Two tell us that he went out weeping as he went, and one infers that he wept where he was.

Now these are the dry and matter-of-fact statements of the four historians who have left us the record. It is obvious, I think, that they are independent and original reports. One was not made up from another, but each came from a different source. The story as told in Matthew appears to have come from a Jewish source somewhat prejudicial to Peter; the story in Mark was derived from Peter himself; the story in Luke may have come from a Greek proselyte,

and that in the Fourth Gospel must be attributed to John.

But this dry detail has a great deal of life in it, and that life and the whole vivifying truth that is in it must come through an imaginative conception of the circumstances. For as Browning says of his great work, "Fancy with fact is just one fact the more;" so if we would realize the substantial verity in these diverse records, and see the full strength of their inherent inspiration, they must be "informed, transpierced, and thridded" by the imagination that sees other lives in the light of one's own experience. If we can do this we shall get a picture that will live before us, in true color, right perspective, and proportionate emphasis. This is the end aimed at and reached by literary and ethical interpretation of literature; but if we deny our imagination, and insist upon a verbal harmony, we may, indeed, produce a kind of harmony, but there will be no more beauty or life in it than there is in the putting together of the mortised and tenoned blocks in a Chinese puzzle.

Let us then endeavor to bring before us the actual facts in this denial of Peter.

First of all we must get some conception of the man. He was a fisherman who followed his occupation not for sport, but as a means of liveli-

hood. He was a rough, rugged, and strong man, liable to mighty impulses of temper as sudden and fierce as the storms which made the waves boisterous on the lake where he was accustomed to sail and fish. He did most of his work naked, that he might be unincumbered in battle with the sea. Endurance and hardship, and the precarious nature of his occupation, had enlarged a natural courage to supreme boldness and great self-confidence. When he was summoned to discipleship he had acquired sufficient wealth to make his acceptance a matter of real self-sacrifice, and this he willingly made, entering with his whole heart, and as far as his understanding would permit, into the schemes and plans of his Master. From the very first he took a foremost position among the twelve, and was one of the three whom Jesus chose as the members of his inner council. It was he who made the first great confession of faith in the Messiah, and it was he to whom Jesus, speaking in an allegoric manner, declared, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my congregation, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." On account of his self-confidence he sometimes overstepped the bounds of modesty and deference, and rallied his Master on his depression of spirits and his forebodings of evil. Jesus, however,

understood the nature of his disciple, and did not hesitate to rebuke him when there was need of it. He even applied to him the same language as that with which he himself met the temptation in the wilderness. "Satan," he said, addressing Peter, "get thee behind me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God." On the whole, however, Peter was loyal and sincere. Of the avarice and small-mindedness which characterized Judas, he had none; nor was he guilty of the calculating prudence of Philip; nor was he dull of comprehension, as Judas Lebbæus; nor did he know how to sympathize with the agnostic, though faithful disciple, Thomas. He was born to be a leader, ruling men by force, by the weight of his assertions, and by the downright strength of his personality. His weakness was in his superior self-confidence, and in that egotism which assured him he could not be taken unawares. On the front of his escutcheon he might have engraved the words, "Always prepared." The course of his life shows for the most part that he was true to his ideal. But the fatal element in that trust was that his resources reached no further back than himself; hence, when his self-confidence deserted him, he was utterly lost. At the command of his Master, he would walk on the water, but when he began to sink he for-

got even how to swim. Such a man as this needs sifting. Jesus told him that Satan had asked that he might have him for this very purpose. He was the only one of the disciples whom the devil counted it worth a special effort to obtain. Judas was only small game, and he could bring but little advantage to the kingdom of evil if he betrayed his master; but if Peter could be won, then the scheme of Jesus would fail. When a man is estimated highly, both by his friends and enemies, then we know that he is of some value. This was the case with Peter. Satan had asked for and obtained the privilege of trying him, but Jesus had interposed his prayer that his friend might not fail in his faith. The issue then was joined between them.

The trial, or test, begins at the Last Supper. The preliminary conflict is in the matter of washing the disciples' feet. Peter's refusal to allow Jesus to perform this service for him is the first victory won by the devil. He is beaten down and overcome, but Jesus comes to the rescue, and Peter recovers; but in the impetuosity of his subsequent submission to the will of Jesus, he is almost borne over again into the enemy's ranks. When the supper is ended and Jesus begins to tell his disciples of his going away,

Peter demands whither he is going, and professes to be willing to lay down his life for the Master's sake. He undoubtedly meant this, and would have done it; but Jesus tells him that the cock will not crow till he has thrice denied that he knows him. This was in the early evening. Peter was then wide awake, and full of courage; and if he did not dispute the saying, we must believe the reason to be that he thought it so wholly improbable that it was not worth while to deny it. Now follows the long table talk, and the wonderful prayer at the close. The disciples saw the ecstasy of Jesus in this conversation and prayer, and were themselves affected by its thrilling mysticism and its portentous language. They could not understand it all, but they saw their Master as they had never seen him before. The sublimity of his rapture, the positiveness of heavenly communion, the clearness of his hope of ultimate victory, and the firmness of his grasp of thought in relation to themselves, showed them how the supernatural was no transcendent notion but an immanent fact, realizing itself in the natural, and assimilating itself to it. In that prayer, God, heaven, earth, Jesus, and themselves were all involved in one kingdom, and under one dominant authority.

Now consider what the effect must have been

upon these disciples as this high conversation and prayer went on. You have listened in breathless attention to the rendering of a marvellous symphony. As its tones have risen and fallen on your ears, and you have become absorbed in the development of the theme, you have forgotten your physical condition, the strain and stress of the attention, the burden and weight of the joyful pain it gave you; and when it ceased you have hardly known whether you were in the body or out of the body. If you will allow your imagination to have its work, you will see something of what the result must have been upon these disciples as Jesus concluded that prayer which now forms the seventeenth chapter of John. It was midnight when it was finished, and then they all departed for the garden on the side of the Mount of Olives. The streets of the city were filled with people as they wended their way thither. A mysterious sense of danger is upon them. Jesus tells them that before morning dawns they will be scattered as sheep without a shepherd, for they will all be offended because of him. Then Peter, foremost as usual, speaks up. "Though all shall be offended yet will not I." But Jesus only sadly repeats the prediction he made at the table, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow before

thou hast denied that thou knowest me." They enter the garden, and there Jesus breaks completely down, and gives way to the anguish which filled his soul, as he thinks of his work which is done and yet not done, and which cannot be done without him. The agony grows heavier and heavier, but it does not separate him from the Father. More closely does he cling to Him as the deeper he enters into the shadow. The disciples, wearied, fall asleep, yet to only one of them does he speak: "Simon, couldst not thou watch with me for one hour?" The hour passes, and strength is given him to drink the bitter cup. Then comes the arrest. The disciples are now wide awake. Peter proves his valor by making a bold attack upon one of the officers, but the blow fails of its aim, and the man is only wounded. At the command of the Master, Peter puts up his sword; and then, as the officers gather about Jesus, he sees there is no hope of rescue, and together with the rest he takes to flight. It would have been well for him if he had stayed away, but he was not the man to beat a permanent retreat. Love and natural courage drew him back and carried him into the very midst of danger. Alone he makes his way as speedily as possible to the city and on to the palace of the high priest. At last he

stands before the gate, but it is closed. In some way another disciple, who by special favor was already within the court, learns of Peter's presence and gets permission to bring him in. Peter joyfully accepts the chance; but just as he enters, the maid servant who attends the gate gets a good look at him, and her suspicions are aroused. She suddenly flings at him the charge, half question and half assertion: "Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus!" Peter is taken unawares. Full of desire to be there, trusting in the safe conduct of the other disciple, conscious also of the sincerity of his motive, he does not stop to reflect upon the full meaning of the accusation; but regarding it as the unwarranted and uncalled for remark of a subordinate, he sees nothing criminal in evading a question which threatened to prevent him from occupying the place which he had by an unexpected fortune just obtained, and therefore he replied: "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about."

How many would regard this evasion as perfectly legitimate! Do we not so answer when a question is asked us by one who has no right to make the inquiry, and especially if the inquiry is directed against our interests? And yet we are never quite satisfied with such an evasion.

We feel that the answer is not wholly true, though in the instant when we answered it we felt no compunction. But reflection shows us the falsity of our position, and we invariably say to ourselves: If the question had not been sprung upon us, and we had been permitted time to think, we could have given an answer which would have been true, and yet safe for ourselves. Now the circumstances show that this was Peter's situation. He did not intend to be disloyal to his Master. He was in the very act of proving his loyalty by his presence, and in fact doing, as he thought, more than any other disciple in this direction. He therefore looked upon the interruption of the servant as a hindrance to this end. But he very soon saw it was a mistake, and yet he could not retreat from it. When he was accused the second time he had to tell a downright lie to cover up the half lie already told. Now he was committed to this course. Presently a necessity arose for a third lie. A kinsman of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off in an attempt to kill him, now comes forward and recognizes him as the man who did that deed. "Did I not see thee in the garden with him?" There is now no help for the poor man. His natural courage vanishes. He is perhaps not wholly himself, for it is now three

o'clock in the morning and he has been under a terrible strain all the night long. The last hour has been full of horrible torture of mind. He has seen the determination of cruel men to kill his best friend, and he has heard only harsh and malicious words, and he has been betrayed by an incontinent rashness into an evasion of the truth and a positive denial; and now that same overpowering impulse is upon him, and for the third time he denies any knowledge of his Lord and emphasizes his denial with oaths and curses. This is a fearful fall, and yet no execrations rise from the Master's lips, and no awful condemnation springs from our own breasts. Pity and not blame is the emotion that struggles most for utterance. We do not even think of the hurt he has inflicted on his Master and friend, but of the awful hurt he has inflicted upon himself. We cannot believe that he failed either in love or in faith. We can imagine that if he had been arrested with his Master and brought before Caiaphas, and put upon trial, he would have confessed him as boldly as he had done many a time before. We cannot doubt that he would have heroically defended him or bravely died with him, if such a chance had been offered; but it is true, as has often been observed, that "a great deed of heroism is often easier than loyalty in

small things." A charge preferred by Caiaphas, the chief justice in the high court of the nation, would have aroused his courage and stiffened every fibre of his moral nature; but the accusation of a maid who was nothing but a door-keeper threw him off his balance, and he plunged into a wrong without weighing the consequences, and therefore he was caught in a net of circumstances from which he could not break away. So he fell into the very sin which Jesus had predicted, and that one which of all others he felt himself incapable of committing because of the depth and passion of his love. This is plainly shown by his repentance. At the moment when he was so vehemently denying his Lord, he heard the cock crow, announcing the dawning of the morning, and as he looked up he met the eye of Jesus; and immediately the whole extent and depth of his sin became present to his consciousness, and he precipitately rushed forth from the court and found a place of solitude where he sat down and buried his face in his hands, and wept and sobbed with breaking heart. That breaking of his heart, that contrition of soul, that overflowing fountain of tears, that deep and pungent sense of his sin, and its accompanying consciousness of the unchanged love of his Master, saved him from despair, and unites him to us

with such sympathy that we would fain sit and weep with him, for our own tears involuntarily start as we hear through the sobs the self-judgment of his weakness: "I thought I never could do it; never! never!"

It seems almost unnecessary to speak of the lesson conveyed by this incident. The lesson is in the incident. Its analogue is in our own lives and experiences. Our great peril is just where Peter's was, in our weakness, and our weakness consists in an overestimate of our own individualism. We think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. Max Nordau says that one of the most significant signs of degeneration is egomania, by which he means that isolation of the individual from the community in which self interest is the main pursuit of life. A man becomes an egoist through a determination to be self centred in all things. The result is that he expands at his own expense, and grows large by absorption without assimilation. This excess ruins him. He overdoes his development, and puts so fine an edge upon himself that it breaks down when used. This was Peter's fault. He had cultivated his self-confidence until his self-sufficiency became insufficiency. He was weakest where he thought he was strongest. If he had been approached with a bribe, the man

would hardly have lived to complete the offer. Contemplation of wrong toward his master was impossible. Wilful deliberate wickedness was not in him, and building on this fact he did not think that he could be taken unawares. The devil understood this. He knew he could not take Peter by assault, but he could spring a trap, and catch him.

Many a man has been beaten in this same way. One finds himself in a company with which he has no sympathy, but it is not easy to get away. Circumstances arise in which he thinks it needful to compromise himself, either for his own defence or for the defence of his friends. He would save himself, and yet he yields to that which is sure to ruin him, and he goes forth a lost man. Priding himself on his honor, he becomes dishonorable. He affiliates with evil, and the evil masters him. The hell on the earth and under the earth is not occupied so much by monsters of depravity and sinners of their own free will, as by those respectable men who have whipped the devil of expediency around the stump of indirection; by those who have first evaded the truth, and afterwards completed the lie with oaths and curses. And the pity of it is that such men are for the most part naturally noble, high-minded, finely sensitive to good impressions, generous,

and quick in their sympathies. They are men who accept the sentiment that —

> "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
> These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

And such men fail because their self-reverence does not pass on to a reverence for a higher being than themselves, and their self-knowledge does not lead them to a knowledge of God, and their self-control does not open the way to a surrender to the infinite purity.

Safety, then, lies not in individualism alone, for this is a snare and a deceit, but it lies in the conjunction of the individual with the world about him, and with God, who is over all; it is in the consciousness that we are not our own, but that we belong to Him who gave himself for us; it is in a recognition of the fact that this natural life of ours, with all its faculties and powers, is not separate from the supernatural, but is allied to it, by virtue of our being made in its image and constituted in its likeness, by virtue also of that divine evolution by which the psychical, which is first, advances to the spiritual, which is beyond it, not by leaping a chasm, but by transformation, by the application of spiritual law to the natural world. In this process there is one thing which belongs exclusively to us. We must surrender

our self-confidence. We must seek regeneration through repentance. The kingdom of heaven is made up of repentant souls. It is filled with those who have been washed from their sins. Its subjects are the participators in a reconciliation, and their loyalty is evidenced by the way in which they accept the consequences of their former weakness and sin. Peter's tears were an evidence that though he had denied his master through weakness he had not broken faith with him. The anguish of his soul was the sign of his restoration. Losing his self-confidence, there was room now for unmeasured confidence in his Lord. Henceforth he would not keep himself, but he would be kept by infinite power. Being sifted, the chaff fell out and the wheat remained. But the fact of his weakness remains also, and is perhaps the source of that strength which subsequently enabled him to fulfil his once bold and unthinking boast: "Lord, I am ready both to go to prison and to die with thee." The whole truth of Peter's sin and repenting is well summed up in the Folk song of Longfellow.

"Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache;
The reddening scars remain, and make
Confession.
Lost innocence returns no more;
We are not what we were before
Transgression.

But noble souls through dust and heat
Rise from disaster and defeat
The stronger,
And conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
No longer.

IV.

PILATE'S LACK OF CONVICTION.

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
Unto thine ear I hold the dead sea-shell
Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
Which had Life's form and Love's, but by my spell
Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.

Rosetti, in *The House of Life.*

And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Was, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin.

Browning, *The Statue and the Bust.*

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood for the good or evil side.

Lowell.

IV.

PILATE'S LACK OF CONVICTION.

Jesus answered him: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? — JOHN xviii. 34.

THIS question is not asked for information, but for the double purpose of defence and rebuke. In order to understand its full force we must review the circumstances that led to its propounding.

Jesus had been arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin for trial. His accusers had utterly failed to make good their charges, and it seemed as if acquittal were inevitable; but Caiaphas, with Sadducean shrewdness, had succeeded in drawing from Jesus a confession which sealed his fate without the necessity of witnesses. It was a wholly illegal proceeding, but it answered the end in view.

When he saw the whole fabric of evidence against Jesus broken down by the irreconcilable

contradictions of the witnesses, he put Jesus himself upon the stand, and demanded of him under oath whether he were the Christ, the Son of God. To this Jesus replied in the affirmative, and added thereto a solemn prediction taken from one of the prophets: "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Caiaphas was astounded by this declaration. He believed in a Messiah, and in one who should come in the full glory and splendor of the ancient predictions; but when this man who now stood before him, identified himself with this prophecy, it appeared nothing less than the worst and most presumptuous blasphemy. There was then no acting of a part, but a real and genuine expression of abhorrence and fear when he rent his clothes and cried out, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold now ye have heard his blasphemy; what think ye?" And when the whole Sanhedrin, without waiting for the formality of a ballot, gave in their verdict by acclamation: "He is worthy of death," they did it in full sympathy with Caiaphas, and without one particle of compunction for the failure to convict him on the testimony of witnesses whom they had summoned. To us the whole procedure was an out-

rage. We know that the court was prejudiced, and that before its assembling the death of Jesus had been determined upon. It was for this that the Sanhedrin had made arrangements with the traitor, and it was for this that they had brought Jesus before Annas for a preliminary examination, an act wholly unlawful ; it was for this that they had convened at an unusual hour in the morning, and had rushed the trial through, without according to the prisoner the right of an advocate and defender. From the beginning they had been urged by an unreasonable hate, and therefore this utterance of their verdict, although the expression of a sincere conviction, is not free from the guilt which is attached to the whole proceedings. The man before them was innocent, and the crowning sin for which they are condemned is that they hated him without a cause.

But the verdict was no sooner reached than they were met by the humiliating fact of their inability to execute it. The case must be carried to the higher court of Pilate, and this must be done immediately. The Sanhedrin knew well the temper of the people. They knew that Jesus had a tremendous influence throughout Galilee, and that even in Judæa there were many who would rush to save him because of the won-

derful works which he had wrought, and the great consideration which he had shown to the poor and the outcast and the despised. Jerusalem at this time was full of such people who had come there to attend the feast. If these should take a notion to deliver him, their condemnation would amount to nothing. It was necessary, therefore, that he should at once be brought before Pilate, and if he could only be persuaded to pronounce sentence upon him, the way would be clear. The people would certainly go back on a Messiah who could not save himself from the power of a Gentile judge. So Jesus was brought before the governor.

But now a strange difficulty presented itself. The charge on which they had convicted him was that he called himself a son of God. But such a charge as this would have been ineffective before a Roman tribunal. Paganism was too much accustomed to the idea of sons of God, and godlike men, to account it a crime that any man should make such a claim either for himself or for others. Had they brought this accusation, Pilate would have answered: "This charge is not within my jurisdiction. Rome tolerates all religions, and does not presume to interfere with any man's theology. Rome recognizes all the gods, but does not believe in the supremacy of

any. Universal truth is a fiction, but truth may be particular and local, and as such it has its uses. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind. This case is accordingly ruled out of court."

The priests were shrewd enough to perceive this attitude of Pilate, and accordingly, when they bring Jesus before him, they make a change in their accusation. At first they simply demand that he shall confirm the sentence which they have pronounced, and put it into execution. He demands what crime the accused is guilty of. They reply, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee." But Pilate is suspicious. It is a strange thing for the Jews to deliver one of their own number to the Roman authority. Ordinarily they would go any length to rescue a man who had defied the Roman power, and set himself in opposition to its law. They were malcontents, plotters of rebellion, instigators of revolt, and sympathizers with conspirators and assassins. Pilate knew this; he was perfectly assured in his own mind that not one of those men who appeared before him was impelled by any feeling of loyalty to the Roman government, or aroused by any sentiment of friendship toward him as the governor. Hence he contemptuously re-

ferred the matter back to them. "Take ye him and judge him according to your law." Pilate is irritated, and he has cause for it. Here are these men trying to force him to take sides in a theological quarrel, and they manifest their cats-paw intention in a most disagreeable way. They have forced Jesus to enter the hall of judgment, but they will not themselves go in because of defilement. They cannot eat the passover if they should do this. So they force Pilate to come out to them. Indirectly, and not less surely, the Roman government is thus insulted by them, and all the while they are pretending an anxiety to do nothing contrary to the law. They say, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." Yet they had repeatedly conspired to assassinate this man. They had hounded his footsteps, sought to take him by surprise, and had stooped at last to bribery that they might get him in their hands. Their pretence of carefulness for the law was only a shrewd device to get Pilate into difficulty and make him the medium of their murderous purpose. Hence they add the charge that Jesus has set up a claim as King of the Jews. This converts the accusation into a political offence. Of this, Pilate is bound to take cognizance. But instead of demanding from the accusers a reason

for their charge, and proof of it, he goes back to Jesus and asks him: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" This question discloses the character of the governor, and Jesus, with that calm, clear, pungent incisiveness which always marks his moral judgment, and compels others to sit in judgment upon themselves, makes this demand in reply: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" The meaning of this is plain. "You are the Roman governor, the judge appointed by authority to judge righteously, and administer the law impartially, and now are you willing to be the instrument of men for the carrying out of purposes which you know are wrong? Have you no convictions of your own, no settled policy on which you can stand? Are you here to investigate and find out the truth of things for yourself, or are you merely the mouthpiece of men who hate me?"

The question thus interpreted shows the insight of Jesus. It opens before us the real character of Pilate, and shows his attitude toward the truth.

At first he attempts to avoid the home thrust. He asks with scorn, "Am I a Jew? What have I to do with the question anyway? Your own nation and your chief priests have delivered you unto me. What have you done that they should

thus seek your destruction?" Then Jesus, unwilling to leave Pilate with any excuse whatever, unfolds to him the fundamental principle of his kingship: "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now my kingdom is not from hence." To Pilate this was a very harmless declaration; he saw no rebellion in it, and no opposition to regularly constituted authority. So he merely answers, "Thou art a king, then?" To this Jesus replies, "Thou sayest it; to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." But Pilate treats this answer with complete indifference. He asks, "What is truth?" To that question he thinks no answer can be given. If Jesus claims to be a king in the kingdom of truth, he has no more to do with it than if he should claim to be the king of the moon.

Then he goes out once more to the Jews, and announces his first verdict: "I find no fault in this man at all." That is his verdict to the end; and yet he finally delivers Jesus to the Jews to be crucified.

Now, there are many points for consideration

here, but the one to which I wish to call your attention specifically is the particular defect in the character of Pilate. I hold that man blameless, who, having no opportunity of knowledge, and no means of investigation, maintains a neutral attitude. It is no crime to be ignorant of matters beyond our attainment. The blind man is not a sinner because he cannot see, and the deaf man is not a wretch because he cannot hear. Men without a knowledge of the gospel will never be judged by the gospel. The non-existence of any faculty is sufficient excuse for not exercising it. These I think are self-evident truths. Common sense never disputes them. But the presentation of an opportunity changes all this. Responsibility is measured not by what we know, but by what we ought to know. This is a very heavy burden; but society lays it upon every one to the end that it may have security, and that the foundations of justice be not undermined. So we say that ignorance of the law is no excuse for crime, since it is the business of every man to know what the law is. Hence, whatever we do has in it an element of personal responsibility. This element, which at first seems antagonistic to societary principles, is, in fact, essential to their very existence. We cannot bear the burden of another, unless we bear our own burdens. If we put the

blame of an act of evil upon another, we only weaken ourselves as a link in the chain of human society, but that makes the chain weak. It reduces the average of goodness. The thing to be done is to take the responsibility of the act, and purge ourselves from its evil, and then society will not suffer. The whole theory of substitutionary penalties tends toward this elimination of the personal element in guilt, and in so far breaks down the moral safeguard of society. If we can lay our sins on another, we shall soon think only of a transferrence of the penalty, and, once relieved of that, we shall no longer think about the guilt of them. Now it was to bring Pilate to a true sense of his personal responsibility that Jesus forced him to consider what he was saying when he asked the question: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Pilate was determined to dodge the issue. He did not want to displease the Jews, and he did not want to crucify the innocent man who stood before him. He was irresolute, and drawn hither and thither by conflicting self-interests. He wished to be neutral in the affair, not because he was averse to shedding blood, but because he did not wish his own position to be put in peril. He was by nature insolent, brutal, rapacious, and cruel. He hated the Jews, and was ready to do anything to

annoy them, but he was afraid of them. He knew there were hundreds of desperate men in the city at that very time who carried a dagger concealed beneath their cloaks which they were thirsting to wet in his heart's blood. They were in the pay of the men who were clamoring for the blood of Jesus; and Pilate perceived that the design to make him the executioner of Jesus was a part of the plan to bring the Roman government into greater contempt, and arouse against it a greater execration. The chief priests were aiming to lay the entire responsibility of the death of Jesus upon the governor, so that they would be able to say if the need arose: "The Roman did it." "It was he who crucified the Messiah." Caiaphas had himself announced that this was a matter of expediency. It was for the benefit of the Jewish nation that he insisted upon the death of Jesus by Roman hands. Pilate was therefore driven between Scylla and Charybdis. To crucify Jesus would be sure to help the nation whom he hated. Not to crucify him would be the ruin of himself. Thus the whole question centred about himself, and the lawfulness or unlawfulness, the right or the wrong of it, played no part in his mind. The pressure was terrible, and there seemed to be no escape from its cursed weight. In this dilemma Jesus came to the rescue. He

pointed out the only means by which Pilate could avert the threatened disaster. He wanted him to act as a free man. He presented to him an opportunity of knowing exactly what he was doing. Jesus stood there for investigation. The Roman had power to summon witnesses. He knew that the accused had the right of defence. That was a right guaranteed by centuries of custom, and incorporated in the law. The public sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of a fair trial. The course of legal procedure, though marked by severity, had never been marred by injustice. But the course of the Jews in this case was directly contrary to all this. They had brought a prisoner before him and demanded that he should pass sentence of death upon him from an *ex parte* standpoint. They insisted that Pilate should execute him without a trial. The Roman idea of justice was thus put to scorn. Even Roman forms were to be dispensed with, and the decree of death was to be rendered without passing upon the question of guilt. Now, Jesus really sought to save Pilate from this humiliation. He did not present an argument in his own behalf, but he gave Pilate a chance to take the matter in his own hands, and to appeal to the law. That question: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" was the

means which Jesus took of forcing upon Pilate the full and unsharable responsibility of his position. It suggested not only his right but his paramount duty to form an opinion for himself. He had entered upon the trial. The prosecution had presented its case. The defence had not been heard from. There were witnesses without number, all the way from the poor and distressed people whom he had helped, up to Nicodemus, one of the Sanhedrin. There were the disciples of Jesus, now in hiding, but who would readily come forward if assurance were given them that they could speak freely of their Master. There were Roman centurions, and other officers of Cæsar's household, who would gladly give their evidence if an opportunity were afforded them. It was Pilate's business as a judge to see to it that both sides were fairly presented. He had authority. One word from him, and the whole police force of Jerusalem would have hastened to bring in from every quarter the witnesses for the defence. That act would have taken him from his perilous position between Scylla and Charybdis, and enabled him to stand forth in dignity and honor. It would not have relieved him from all danger, but it would have made danger and honor companions. It would have been an immense triumph for him

after investigating the meaning of that claim of Jesus concerning kingship to have gone before the chief priests and said: "This man is no political insubordinate, no enemy of Cæsar, but a man endowed with a kingly spirit, high minded and noble, pure and true. The Roman government can ask for no better citizens than those who follow him. Instead of a cross, he deserves the highest place in your synagogue, the greatest honor it is in your power to bestow. I therefore acquit him and deliver him to freedom. Let him go where he will, and see ye to it that no harm befalls him."

Such is the logical result had Pilate taken advantage of the suggestion of Jesus, and determined that in the matter of the charges against him he would investigate and speak for himself. But we know that the suggestion was fruitless. Pilate was not up to that standard. He was even lower than his environment. He was dominated by influences which had made him an invertebrate. The old Roman might and glory and sense of honor had departed, and from the palace of Tiberius to the slums of the proletariat there was nothing which could remind one of the days when heroic men of stalwart strength and imperial faith dared ask, like the brave Horatius: —

"How can man die better than facing fearful odds
For the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his gods?"

That spirit had become extinct. Even its fossils were hidden. Rome ruled all realms, but all her decrees were ratified in corruption. Her people believed everything and they believed nothing. There was nothing sacred in religion, nothing sacred in human life. Morality was unknown. Over the whole Roman world rested an atmosphere of doubt and despair. Since the days of the first Cæsar and of Brutus there had arisen no man of authority who sought to rule his own spirit. Everywhere an inordinate selfishness gave itself free rein and rushed on with laughter to its ruin. Pilate breathed this atmosphere, and shared this contempt for virtue. He was a man without convictions, for he looked upon the possession of truth as a fiction. He had no sense of obligation. Spiritual knowledge was to him only a phantom. He had come to regard philosophy and religion as the occupation of fools. He was steeped in a materialistic cynicism. The only question of importance to him was how he might retain his power, acquire more, and avoid difficulty. That made him willing to take another man's word on a subject which his office required him to investigate for himself. It made no difference to him that an innocent man's life was at

stake. A human life was nothing; he would take it or preserve it according as it hindered or helped him in his personal pleasure. He could not understand why a theological question should arouse hatred. So the Jews pressing fiercely for the death of Jesus presented a problem which he had not the capacity to undertake. This stirred his wrath. Why should he be compelled to listen to their disputes, and why should he on the other hand be forced to make an effort to understand them? To avoid the difficulty he offers a compromise. He appeals to the people. "See, I give you your choice: Whom shall I release unto you, this man or Barabbas; your king who has come to save you, or the robber who would destroy you?" The people, instigated by the chief priests, cry out: "Not this man, but Barabbas." Thus did Pilate lose the one chance of doing right and maintaining his dignity. He threw away the right of judgeship when he made that offer to the people.

But that offer was the result of his lack of conviction. He put truth and falsehood into the same scale, and reckoned them as of equal value. Barabbas and Jesus were alike in his estimation. That estimation gives us the measure of his character. When you see him setting up such a choice, you become fully conscious of his inferiority. You begin to have some respect for the

persistent hate which is so inflexibly true to its aim in the passion of Caiaphas; but you regard with contempt the man who suffers himself to be driven and whipped into consenting unto an act which he knows is flagrant injustice. So all the succeeding acts in the tragedy, — the scourging of the man, his array in the purple robe, and Pilate's ostentatious washing of his hands, — become additional reasons for putting upon this Roman governor the scorn of scorn, the contempt that is too deep to express itself in hate.

Now I would have you mark once more the beginning of this self-degradation. Jesus is led to an ignominious death, but no ignominy rests upon him. You condemn with unsparing severity the malice, cruelty, and injustice of the Jews, but you do not bring them into your contempt. The ignominy, the disgrace, the scorn which fills your hearts and minds is visited alone upon this man, who suffered all this injustice to be done because of his weakness, his vacillation, his lack of having convictions. On the face of it, it seems a little thing to refuse to take advantage of an opportunity of knowing the truth. Sometimes such a loss comes through thoughtlessness, sometimes through an unwillingness to put ourselves out a little for the purpose, sometimes because we fear that the truth may be a little unpleasant; but no matter

from what cause it arises, the thing itself is a shirking of responsibility, and the end of that is sure to be a crucifixion of the truth. I am not one of those who count sincerity as the sum of all virtues, for I know that there may be sincerity in the most flagitious persecution; but I say that there can be no real substantial virtue without sincerity, and I think I am right in saying that the subtlest form which evil is taking in society to-day is this disposition to shirk responsibility. The *laissez-faire* element is all-pervasive. It penetrates politics, education, and religion. Its atmosphere shrouds with its lethal influence our homes, our churches, and our municipalities. We have a deadly conservatism which shrinks from knowing and speaking the truth. We are not willing to examine our securities. We put our trust in what was written and done centuries ago, and we do not wish those things to be disturbed lest we ourselves should be disturbed. But, my friends, we are crying Peace! Peace! when there is no peace. The truth is in our midst, and is on trial. Its hands are bound, its feet are manacled, its robes are torn, its words are falsified and distorted; but it boldly challenges every man to a true, independent, and personal judgment. It summons every man to a full and complete investigation. Its demand may be re-

fused and it may be sent to Calvary, but persecution cannot crush it, and death cannot silence its voice. "Three religions," says Principal Fairbairn, "met in the judgment hall of Pilate. Two were of the past, one was of the future." The two unlike in form were alike in spirit. Both were unreal, their vitality exhausted, their ancient beauty wasted away, and their moral power broken and crushed by a vain ceremonialism. Jehovah and Jupiter had alike been driven out of their respective temples, and the sacred places had been turned into houses of merchandise and dens of thieves. The Jewish faith, once a mighty power for righteousness, and the Roman faith, once the inspiration to heroic lives and magnificent deeds, had both sunk to the low level of an empty form, and Jesus, a living spirit, sublime in his ideals, and infinitely grand in the vigor of his conceptions and supreme in the strength of his convictions, stood between them and offered salvation to the one and newness of life to the other. Both rejected him, and of both the world records this verdict. The one was consumed by hate, the other perished through impotence.

But the new faith, the religion represented in a perfect humanity, survives yet and is at work in the world; and although it still bears the marks of Calvary, it holds forth promises of redemption,

and appeals with confidence to the future, in virtue of its ever present helpfulness and its most reasonable hopes.

The most practical word in conclusion is this: The religion of Jesus is before you. You have heard many things said about it. The Gospel message has, in one way and another, come to your ears. This hearing involves you in the responsibility of a decision. You must come to some opinion concerning it, you must make up your mind. The question is not what does the church think, or what do the creeds affirm, but what do you think, and what are the grounds of your thinking? The investigation required is not long, but it is important.

There are a hundred side issues, but the main issue is simple, plain, and visible to any man that has eyes for seeing. Do you accept Jesus as the king of the kingdom of spiritual truth? Are you ready to be a subject of that kingdom? Some of you have answered this in the affirmative. You have made your confession. What force has it in your daily life? How deep is the conviction? Press the question home to your souls, and answer it in the light of the obligations that are resting upon you: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did another tell it thee of me? Are you acting on your own responsibility,

as men and women who know in whom they believe; or are you shirking your responsibility, and laying the blame of your inactivity on other shoulders? If so, do you think you can, like Pilate, wash your hands and say, "I am innocent," and expect that plea to be accepted before the Court of Eternal Truth?

V.

THE GREAT QUESTION.

I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life. — JOHN xiv. 6.

THE law of truth was in his mouth. — MAL. ii. 6.

MEANTIME, whilst the door of the temple stands open night and day before every man, and the oracles of this truth cease never, it is guarded by one stern condition; this, namely: it is an intuition; it cannot be received at second hand. Truly speaking, it is not instruction but provocation that I can receive from another soul. What he announces I must find true in me or reject, and on his word, or as his second, I can accept nothing. On the contrary, the absence of this primary faith is the presence of degradation. As is the flood so is the ebb. Let this faith depart, and the very words it spake, and the things it made, become false and hurtful. Then falls the church, the state, art, letters, life. — EMERSON.

NOTHING is so grand as Truth, nothing so forcible, nothing so novel. — LANDOR.

V.

THE GREAT QUESTION.

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him: What is truth? — JOHN xviii. 37.

THERE are some words, which when uttered in speech or seen on the printed page are too profound in meaning for immediate and full comprehension. They imply vast pre-suppositions and extensive knowledge. They present objects of thought to our consciousness, but only in dim shadowy outline and fleeting surface. They rush by like a mighty train with thundering swiftness, and we can no more take in their meaning than we can hold in detailed and precise vision the whirling wheels, or the faces of the passengers at the car windows. Or they are like those events which we sometimes witness, and of which we say: "The action was swifter than any description," or, "It takes more time to tell it than it took to do it." By this we simply

mean that our perception, though real, was not realized until subsequent reflection developed it.

Such words are science, art, religion, evolution, philosophy, humanity, justice, love, and hundreds of others common enough in our vocabulary, and in the speech of the world. These words make a distinct impression on our minds; but they are not and cannot be comprehended until reflection presents them in detail. This will be apparent if you stop to think for a moment of the difference in degree which such a word as *science* makes upon the mind of a child when he hears it, and on the mind of a highly educated man. They both know the meaning of the term, and both get a flash-light view of it when it is spoken; but in the one case a few pages of a primer on botany or zoölogy or natural philosophy will cover subsequent reflection, while in the other case subsequent reflection will take the man through whole libraries and unnumbered experiments and the most extensive investigation. Now I might say that the whole of education consists in getting the power to know what we see, and to understand what we hear. This is certainly true of religious education. The work of Jesus as a teacher was founded on the condition: "He that hath eyes to see let him see, and he that hath ears to hear let him hear." In his

instruction he was ever using words that implied some power of insight and some previous knowledge. He did not expect men to understand him unless they made an effort to catch his meaning. Inattentive, thoughtless listeners never knew what he was talking about. "Without a parable spake he not unto them." Why? Because he knew that if his speech did not cause some pain, some real hardship of the brain, or some tugging at the heart, all the pleasure which a man might receive from it would be of no advantage whatever. Hence, even in his most original teaching he never sought to make things easy, but only to make them plain. He measured the capacity of men, and gave them as much as they could bear. When people complained that they did not understand him, he sometimes repeated his message, but he never diluted it. I suppose he thought that the words which he used were the best possible words for conveying his idea, and if men would only seek to understand them they would find that they were, after all, the simplest. When the Rabbi Nicodemus told him that he was propounding enigmas, and querulously demanded, "How can these things be?" Jesus replied: "Verily I say unto thee, We speak that we do know and testify to that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If

I have told you earthly things, such as are within your material comprehension, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things, such as are within your spiritual understanding?"

This fairly represents the general attitude of Jesus as a teacher and preacher of spiritual truths. He assumed that men could take if they would what he gave them. He did not try to adapt himself to men who suffered their wits to go wool-gathering while he was talking. He demanded close and persistent attention, because his message was worthy of it, and he himself was qualified to give it. This was the best compliment he could possibly pay his hearers. He approached them on the best and highest side of their nature. He talked about great and grand things, assuming that they themselves were great enough to appreciate them. He told them of mysteries, not to perplex them but to quicken their power of perception. "There is nothing covered," he said, "that shall not be revealed to you, and nothing hid that shall not be known to you; what ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in light, and that which ye have spoken in the secret ear shall be proclaimed on the housetops." I know that another meaning has been put upon this; but its real significance is that they who seek shall

surely find, that even the deep things of God are not beyond the survey of him who will use the faculties with which he is endowed. This is the secret of the power of Jesus as a teacher. Men were stimulated, encouraged, and strengthened in their minds by the task that he put upon them, and they went forth as thinkers to preach a gospel which challenged the highest intellect and the deepest heart of the world.

One of the great words of this Fourth gospel is *Truth*. It is one of those significant words which imply vastly more than can be measured by any one mind. Starting from the lowest conception of it as simple veracity, we move on in our contemplation of it until we find it embracing a boundless realm in which are hid all the treasures of knowledge in all worlds and all ages. Viewed in one light it consists of individual facts innumerable, both revealed and unrevealed; viewed in another light it is an eternal principle by which the value of all things, visible and invisible, is tested. When we utter the word a distinct object is presented to our minds, but nothing short of long and deep reflection can give us any adequate conception of what it is. We stop and think: Why, truth is a very common thing. Men have been speaking it for ages; it is written in the ten thousand times

ten thousand books of all nations, and engraved on monuments and obelisks and mausoleums, and walls of stone and brick, from the gray dawn of the world's life up to the present hour; it is visible in architecture and painting and sculpture, and parks and gardens, and in public works of all kinds; it is the speech of philosophers and poets and men of science; it was with the Eternal from the beginning, displaying itself in the works of his hands, in the starry heavens, in the evolution of earth, in the varied beauty and utility of Nature's productions; it is back of every system of law, and is wrought into every religion, and is the foundation upon which stands the whole fabric of social life, in the family, the church, and the state; it transcends the material and dwells in the supersensuous realm of spirit; and defying death it proclaims itself the inhabitant of an unending kingdom. For it men have suffered, toiled, and died in torture and ignominious shame, and other men, heedless of the warning, defiant of the power of evil, have gone on choosing it and loving it unto the end.

"Careless seems the great avenger; history's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,

Yet that scaffold sways the future and behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow keeping watch above his own."

But when Jesus used this word did he put as much into it as this? I think he did, and much more also, yet not exactly in this way. Significant as the meaning of it is in his mouth, there is one thing which he connected with it that gave it a deeper meaning than anything which I have touched upon. In his mind truth was nothing except so far as it was manifested in life. He never discussed truth in the abstract. Very rarely did he attempt to prove things in any other way than by an appeal to experience. Hence his idea of truth was related to persons. Of himself he said, "I am the truth." When Pilate questioned him concerning his kingdom, he said: "He that heareth my voice is of the truth;" that is, the truth is manifested in persons who hear my voice, and hearing, accept me personally. This explains Pilate's reply: "What is truth?" Pilate was not asking for information, nor was he speaking in a jesting spirit. In the first place, he did not believe that any information could be given him on that subject; and in the second place, he was too angry with the Jews and too cowardly in spirit to treat anything connected with the

affair in a light manner. Coward and moral invertebrate as he was, he had no capacity for jesting. What then was his attitude? The Roman life of that day will answer this question. The common people were religious. They had maintained and extended the ancient belief in the gods. They were continually worshipping them. They believed they had a kind of property right in them, and one of the privileges conferred by Roman citizenship was the protection by the state of the gods of the citizen. The gods of Rome, however, were unlike the gods of other nations. The Orient worshipped Nature in her lowest forms. The gods to whom the people of the East offered their sacrifices demanded blood, pollution, and death. The Greek idealized Nature, and worshipped beauty. His religion was full of imagination, and accompanied by cheerful rites. He never feared his gods, for he was lord over them. They were the work of his hands, and he could do what he pleased with them. Hence while his worship was often impure, it was never cruel. The Greeks never persecuted for religion's sake. But the religion of Rome was different from all this. It was prosaic, abstract, and utilitarian. It was without legends and without poetry. It was purely practical, and intended for immediate use. All worship was

regulated by law. The Roman rubric is the most complete manual of religious service ever made. Every detail is carefully laid down, and must be punctiliously observed. But there is no soul in the worship, and all expressions of enthusiasm are avoided as being equally abhorrent with impiety. The religious Roman kept a strict account with his gods, always paying just what he owed, and never a penny more or less.

This was the state of religion among the common people of Rome at the beginning of the empire. But no sooner do we come into the ranks of the educated, the wealthy, and the powerful, than we find another condition of things. Here unbelief prevailed. The wave of scepticism which had risen in Greece had swept over Rome and flooded it with contempt and scorn of religion, just as the brilliant scepticism of France in the last century poured its desolating influence over England and Germany. When the Roman went to Athens for his education he obtained both culture and doubt. He joined the Greeks in the theatre in the evening, and saw them laughing at the comedies of Aristophanes making fun of the gods, and the next day he visited the temples and saw his companions of the night before offering sacrifices to the same gods who had so recently been the object of their ridicule. In the schools he heard

questions of philosophy discussed in which the boldest unbelief asserted itself with unblushing audacity. By the time he had finished his education he had lost all faith, and had come to the conclusion to which the practical character of his nature inevitably led him, — that there was no such thing as truth in any realm beyond the immediate perception of his senses. Thus the old creed of his fathers was abandoned, and nothing was put in its place. When republicanism in Rome gave place to imperialism all the rulers of the State had abandoned belief in the gods, except so far as they might utilize such faith in the promotion of their own interests. Cæsar was a materialist in philosophy and yet a minister of religion. Cato in the Roman senate avowed his unbelief, and his speech was accepted as a commonplace of thought. The poem of Lucretius in which there is a denial of God and Providence, and a moral order in the universe, and a spiritual nature in man, was generally received as a true statement of the current opinion among educated men on the topics it discussed. For more than three-quarters of a century this absence of faith had been the companion of all the culture and all the influence of the empire, and in that time no man had arisen with a voice of authority to proclaim any doctrine which appealed to the higher quali-

ties of the soul. Even in the realm of philosophy there was not one who deemed any proposition of sufficient importance to carry a debate upon it to a finish. Epicureanism and Stoicism had their conflicts, but they always ended in a drawn battle. Of course this made Rome tolerant of all religions, because all were alike without foundation, having no reason for existence beyond the mere fancy of the individual. To every question of morals and religion, reaching into the supersensuous sphere, the Roman affixed an interrogation mark, or answered it with a denial. It was useless, he said, to investigate matters that pertained or professed to pertain to life outside of its earthly environment. Now Pilate was the child of this age. He was a product of its indifference, its aimlessness, its go-as-you-please philosophies and religions. When he asked, What is truth? he waited for no answer, because he felt that no answer could be given. Truth to him was a *non ens*, a phantom, and he would no more give attention to an answer than the scientific man of to-day would discuss the theory of phlogiston. To his mind all truth and all theories of truth was a back number, an out-of-date publication. He would give it no more thought than we give the contentions of Galileo's opponents on the revolution of the earth.

If one had pressed him with the question he would have said: "Why do you insist on boring me with such senseless notions? The peasants and the common people believe in such things, and it is well enough for them. They know no better, and it is a harmless occupation for their minds, and I do not care to disturb them in it; but for myself I can get no answer to the question which is not met by an opposing answer. The whole of religion is nonsense. What good does it do to pray? Do the gods hear us? No, if they exist they have enough to attend to their own affairs. Let them take care of the other world, and let man take care of this. It is our business to govern men, to make other nations subservient to our interests, to keep the peace between those who are inclined to quarrel, to facilitate commerce and trade, to build good roads and erect public buildings, and in general to look out that all things are prospering in the state. With these things the gods have nothing to do. They will not collect our taxes, nor pay our soldiers, nor oversee our laborers. They have never eaten at our banquets though we have feasted in their honor; they have never blessed us though we have erected temples and shrines for them. In these things we have wasted vast sums which might better have been put into food and clothing and

shelter for the rabble of beggars that infest our streets." This expresses the attitude of the Roman governor towards that idea which Jesus named as the truth. It was the common attitude of Roman power.

Now, we are bound to inquire into the reason for this attitude, and we find it in the simple fact that in recent Roman history there had been no incarnation of truth. Philosophy had given birth to bodiless abstractions. The idea of loving the truth, of serving it, and dying for it had no expression in Roman experience. "There is nothing certain," says one of the philosophers of the period, "save that nothing is certain, and there is no more wretched and arrogant being than man." With such opinions as this it is not to be expected that truth would have any vital relations. It was a thing only, and its possession was a matter of no moment to the individual. Pilate had no capacity for understanding the word of Jesus, because of his unbelief in the reality of truth. He had never known a man who was willing to lose his dinner on behalf of any moral proposition, much less one who would imperil his life for such a cause. To his eyes Jesus appeared as a harmless enthusiast, and his reason for attempting to save him was because he did not think any man ought to die for the sake of his religion. But even this

proposition, although it was in accord with Roman sentiment, did not arouse him to any act of self-sacrifice in its support. His indifference to truth made him indifferent to everything in the nature of duty. He cared for one thing only, and that was to save his own miserable head. To do this he bent himself in craven fear before the surging wrath of the Jews, and refused to call in the means of protecting his prisoner. Only once does he show any sign of earnestness in trying to save the poor victim who stood before him. This was after his wife had sent word to him that she had suffered many things in a dream because of this righteous man. Men who have abandoned faith in the unseen and have surrendered to materialism are of all men the most subject to superstition. Pilate is a disbeliever in God and immortality, but he thinks there may be something after all in the imaginations produced by a disordered stomach. That is an intimation of bad luck, a prediction of disaster which is to be heeded. So he stirs himself, but in his cowardice and fear he overdoes the matter, and makes a fatal mistake. He puts the case into the hands of the people, and so places himself at the mercy of a tumultuous mob, which he is wholly unable to restrain. When he offers to release either Barabbas or Jesus, he surrenders his only and the last chance of saving

the latter. But the question comes to us, Why does he make such a monstrous proposition? Because as a moral degenerate he sees no difference between the two persons on the score of their religious views. He knows that the sum of the charge against Jesus is that he is the advocate and preacher of a doctrine which he summarizes as the truth. Barabbas may be a Jew, a believer also in a system of truth, but widely divergent from that of Jesus. He as a Roman would not punish either of them for the views they hold; and when he offers the choice he deliberately puts the criminal alongside the good man, and so far as their respective attitude toward a higher law is concerned treats them as equals. In respect to absolute indifference toward the truth he is consistent. Thus does he emphasize the utter shamelessness of his nature.

Now there are some fundamental lessons which grow out of this incident.

The first is the weakness of unbelief in moral emergencies. Somehow faith and morals are closely connected. Back of every action is a motive. That motive rests upon a foundation of some sort. It may be an intuitive perception, or it may be the conclusion of a process of reasoning. This perception or this conclusion has also a history. It stands in accord with the universal

consensus of men, or it is opposed to this. It is therefore either good or bad. I am not now saying that this can always be clearly discerned, for we are all of us conscious at times of mixed motives, so that we cannot fully decide whether a contemplated action is right or wrong. In this case help must be called in. But it is safe to say in general that the common judgment of mankind on moral questions is sufficient for the times in which men live. That is to say, the common moral judgment of to-day is the right judgment for to-day. It follows then that the more men believe in these judgments, the more they see them as truth, the better will they be able to act, and the more nearly will they conform to right usages. This consensus of belief furnishes a moral authority. It presents a definite and clear ideal of what is right. Unbelief is simply the negation of this authority. It is an elimination of rectitude because it takes away the motive to rectitude which is a desire to place one's self in harmony with this ideal moral authority. The unjust judge in the New Testament story said of himself, "I fear neither God nor man." That made him unjust. He had forsworn the criterion of justice to which men gave in their adherence. That he afterwards yielded to a claim of justice was solely owing to

the clamorings of a woman who threatened to beat him black and blue if he did not listen to her plea. She restored him to faith in her powers of persuasion, and so gave him a motive for action which he could not very well resist.

It is true that right action does not always accompany belief in the right, but unbelief simply leaves one without any impulse whatever. The position of such a man is neutral, but neutrality on moral questions is often the devil's best ally. He who will not stand up and be counted may be put down as an enemy to the cause of righteousness, because he is a coward in the service of truth. This was Pilate's position all along. He was afraid of the Jews, afraid of Jesus, and afraid of Tiberius Cæsar. If he had had a supreme belief in the truth, if he had trusted even in the gods of Rome as Horatius trusted to them when he fought by the bridge, and when it was cut down flung himself, heavy armed as he was, into the Tiber, he would have found his way out of that perplexity into which the Jews plunged him; and whether Jesus had been saved or not, he would at least have saved himself from the everlasting contempt of men. But his unbelief affords him no place of refuge, and no shield from the storm of the world's scorn. The man with no faith is always a weakling. It is useless

for him to meet any foe. His spinal column is disjointed, and he can neither walk, nor run, nor fly. He can only cringe and crawl.

In the second place, belief must be joined with life. Truth in a person is visible. It is then dynamic. It is full of energy. Truth in abstract form is like a stream in the fields, beautifying the landscape and running on its murmuring way to the sea. Men may sing about it and rejoice over it, but it is of small practical use. Now take that stream and direct its course so that its water shall fall upon a wheel. The wheel begins to turn, and that turning moves a mighty shaft, and now ten thousand wheels are moving, and there is a rattling of looms, and a whirling of spindles, and a buzzing of pickers, and hundreds of men and women and children are at work gathering the materials and furnishing the product of a mighty industry. This is truth realized in living action. It has gone to work in the world, and its labor means progress, and life more abundant. So when Jesus said: "He that heareth my voice is of the truth," he meant the truth which he himself exemplified in his life. Life was no puzzle to him, and truth was no phantom. He has nothing to say of time and chance happening to a man. To him all things are ordered and sure. Even his ideals are real, tangible, and

reachable. He that doeth the truth cometh to the light. Is a man perplexed, trying to study out the meaning of the sphinx? Let him quit that sort of business and give himself up to doing what he knows he ought to do. He may not see very far at first; but he can take one step, and that one step will guarantee his power of motion. It is perfectly marvellous when we come to think of it, how little new truth Jesus actually proclaimed, and how much he displayed in his life. There is scarcely an utterance of his which did not pre-suppose the knowledge of it in the hearer. What he did was to make that truth evident to the perceptions of men. When he said, "Blessed are the meek, and the merciful, and the pure in heart," men understood him as speaking out of his own experience. There stood before them a man who was really and in very truth meek, merciful, and pure. When he talked about God his Father, he did it as a child talks about his father. When he said that he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him, they who heard him felt that they were looking, not upon a theorizer, but upon an actual living diplomat from heaven, a minister from that court. With him life was achievement, and achievement was no proposition about truth, but truth itself.

> "What is the point where Himself lays stress?
> Does the precept run, 'Believe in Good,
> In Justice, Truth, now understood
> For the first time?' or 'Believe in Me,
> Who lived and died, yet essentially
> Am Lord of Life?'"

This is simply all there is of it. Faith in Christ is not a belief in dogmas and doctrines about Christ, but it is belief in a person; and the truth of Christ is not what Christianity has said concerning him, even with the best intent, but it is simply and solely the truth which he lived out, and died for and rose again. And, my friends, I know of no other way of reaching the truth except by following in his footsteps. No man ever comes to the truth by having it preached to him, nor by reading about it, or by meditating upon it. He can never get any good from its environment. He must himself be its environment. He must act it out. And it must first be within in order that it may be without. Like the stream of water in the mill, it must pour in on the heart, setting that and the intellect and the feelings all in motion, that it may turn the wheels of a divine industry in the kingdom of God. There are some people who like Pilate have measured all known systems of philosophy, and have said that there is nothing in them; and they are quite right, not because philosophy is a bad

thing, but because it is not a good thing until it is transmuted through experience into life. There are others who are in despair and yet have not given up the search, but they are sure to fail because they are on the wrong scent. To them the depth saith, "It is not in me," and the sea saith, "It is not with me." And still they are looking; but they will never find it until they look within. There, beyond all doubt, in the moral intuitions of the soul, in the witnessing of the Eternal Spirit, is the truth which makes men free. Would you know the truth, so much of it as is essential to your peace, your happiness, your security in this world and in the next? The rule is simple, plain, unequivocal. He that willeth to do the will of God shall know of the doctrine. Action alone verifies the propositions of the moral consciousness. Do your duty as God presents it to you, and walk as Jesus walked in the actual performance of his obligations, and you will find your path a pathway of light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. Abandon this simple principle, and the inevitable outcome of that desertion is that you will be a moral weakling yielding to the demands of hate, and finally giving the word of command which sends the truth to the cross.

VI.

GUILT DIVINELY MEASURED.

Who could peruse for the first time those four accounts of the great tragedy of the world's history which we know too well as a narrative to understand as a fact, without seeing that the victory of fanaticism was the defeat of Rome? "He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." How expressive of the influence of Roman law is it that from the moment of hearing those words Pilate sought to release his captive! He recognized his vocation at that strange excuse for his failure in fulfilling it; he felt that the Roman governor was called on to teach the peoples committed to his charge the common element of Law. When the cry of the rabble, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," overcame the loyalty of the judge, an example was set up for all time of that obliteration of the justice of Rome by the weakness or the vice of the Romans, which, doubtless, was the most familiar aspect of its legal system to its subjects; but in that concession the Roman law had no part; it was defied, not distorted. — Julia Wedgwood, in *The Moral Ideal.*

VI.

GUILT DIVINELY MEASURED.

Jesus answered, Thou wouldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. — JOHN xix. 11.

THIS saying of Jesus is the occasion of the final effort of Pilate to save him from death. The author of the Fourth Gospel with keen dramatic insight makes this attempt of Pilate to do the right thing the climax of his endeavor, and with true ethical judgment distributes and fixes the responsibility of the crime where it belongs.

We shall see this if we make a brief review of the successive steps in the Roman trial.

After having condemned him in their own court, the Jews bring him before the governor and ask that their sentence be confirmed. Pilate asks, "What evil hath he done?" They reply with the general accusation that he is a criminal. But Pilate sees no evidence of this, and bids them

judge him according to their law. This they had done, but they could not carry out their sentence since the right of capital punishment was wholly in the hands of the Romans. Leaving then the general accusation, they charge him with sedition in making himself King of the Jews. Pilate investigates this charge and finds that it amounts to nothing more than that the prisoner claims to be king in the kingdom of truth, an unknown land to the governor. There is no sedition in this, for it certainly does not interfere with any royal prerogative. But the pressure still continues, and Pilate, vacillating between his sense of right and his fears, adopts a plan which he hopes will be successful. Whether he suggested it first or whether it came from the people, we cannot tell. According to Mark, the people crowd into his presence and demand that the usual favor of releasing a prisoner at this time should be granted them. Pilate understands this as a movement on behalf of Jesus by the people, and it may very well have been so, for by this time the news of the trial had spread, and as Jerusalem was full of strangers, many of whom may have known Jesus and perhaps have received kindnesses at his hand, it was but natural that they should make this effort to save him. Therefore when Pilate demands, "Will ye that I release

unto you the King of the Jews?" he hopes for an affirmative answer. But Mark tells us that the chief priests, anticipating this, stirred up the multitude to demand the release of Barabbas. Now the meaning of this name Barabbas is "The son of the Father," and it is a curious fact that in several ancient versions of the Gospel according to Matthew, this man is called Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the son of the Father. In our version he is called the illustrious Barabbas ; which is probably the correct title, although some of the most distinguished New Testament scholars support the other reading, and make Pilate's question to be according to Matthew: "Shall I release unto you Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the Christ?" But apart from the disputed name, it seems like the irony of fate that a man known as the son of the Father, and acknowledged as a political instigator of sedition, should be the successful competitor of Jesus in so momentous and tragical an event. Pilate, doubtless, thought that the similarity of name, and also of accusation, would only emphasize the contrast between the two, and that the people would without hesitation give their verdict in favor of the innocent. But in appealing to the people his good intention was thwarted, and he thus surrendered his best chance of liberating his prisoner. Unable to stem the

tide of popular fury by such a compromise, he makes an effort to save the life of Jesus by inflicting upon him such a punishment as might arouse a feeling of pity in the hardest heart. He commanded that he should be scourged, after which the soldiers indulged in a heartless and cruel mockery of the victim. They plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe, and then one troop after another marched by and saluted him with the contemptuous words: "Hail King of the Jews!" When this had continued for a while, Pilate caused him to be led into the presence of the chief priests and the people, and pointing to him said with a tone of half pity and half contempt: "Behold the man!" This is an interjectional phrase, and the argument of it is in the patience and humility with which the sufferer bears his terrible pain. It is as if Pilate had said: "Surely you cannot fear a man who is thus unable to protect himself from such treatment, and there is no room for envy where one is so humiliated." But the passion for his death was too great to be averted by this sort of an expedient. The cry that fills the air at that sight is one of madness, "Crucify him! crucify him!" Pilate's reply is a refusal. "Take him and crucify him yourselves; for I find no fault in

him." This they had no right to do, and even if they might have done it, how would it appear in the face of that declaration by the governor: "I find no fault in him"? But they are not to be balked by the reluctance of Pilate. They mean to drive him to do the disagreeable thing and to make him take the responsibility therefor. They accordingly bring forth the charge which they had made in their own tribunal, and they do it with an assumption of strength and appearance of haughtiness that is in marked contrast to the weakness of the governor. "We," they say, "have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself a son of God."

All along Pilate had been afraid. He was afraid of the Jews, he was afraid of his master Tiberius, but now he was more afraid than ever. There was something in the presence of Jesus which had aroused in him a strange presentiment. He was unlike any man he had ever seen. Through all this trial Jesus had manifested a dignity and a majesty which no humiliation could impair. He had not answered a single charge which had been made against him, and yet every word he had uttered, and every action, and even his silence was a complete refutation of criminal act or intent. Pilate was an unbeliever in the gods, and yet, like all men who are dis-

posed to reject belief in the Higher powers, he had a vague notion that they might exist after all. What then if this last charge should be true? What if this man whom he had ignominiously scourged and mocked was in reality a god in disguise? The Roman fables told of such things, but here there might be no fable at all. This man had shown qualities that certainly placed him outside the rank of ordinary men, and was this not a good reason for believing that he might be a supernatural being? With such questions in his mind, Pilate determined to look into the matter further. So once more he went into the Pretorium and demanded of Jesus, "Whence art thou?" But Jesus was silent. Why? Because a direct answer to a man of such indecision would have been either misleading or unintelligible, and it was not the purpose of Jesus to satisfy a superstition. What Pilate needed was not revelation, but reflection on the facts set before him. Besides, the question had nothing whatever to do with the case. Pilate was a judge, and the only matter before him was to see that justice was done. He had already in words acquitted his prisoner. He had affirmed that he found no fault in him. He was perfectly satisfied that Jesus was not a malefactor, nor a disturber of the peace of the realm, nor a rival

king. Every accusation made against him had fallen, and now it made no difference where Jesus came from, his immediate liberation was Pilate's one and only duty. But when a man is unwilling to do his duty, and material things are influencing and urging him to do the thing that is not his duty, that is, to go against his conscience, he will turn every way to see if he cannot find a chance to escape his responsibility. One may succeed for a while in dodging an issue, but the issue will not down, and eventually it will drive the man into a corner.

The silence of Jesus forces this reflection upon Pilate, and he gives angry utterance to the dilemma in which he is placed. "Speakest thou not unto ME?" The emphasis shows where Pilate is hurt. The peasant Jew scorns him, the Roman governor. Before others he might keep silence, but when the governor speaks he must answer, for Pilate was supreme in authority. Yet Jesus may possibly be ignorant of his authority, so he goes on: "Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?" Here then is where Pilate finds himself. If he acts in accordance with reason and justice, he will discharge his prisoner. If he acts without reason, and arbitrarily, he may either acquit or condemn him. If he does the former,

conscience will approve; if the latter, he will crush his conscience, and forego forever the real claims of justice.

To this claim of absolute authority, Jesus makes reply, not in the way of defending himself, or of answering any charge against him, but solely in the way of setting before Pilate both the truth and the error of his assertion. It is therefore for Pilate's sake that he speaks, and not for his own. Pilate is carrying a heavy responsibility, but Jesus will not suffer him to bear more than belongs to him. So in one sentence he distributes and fixes the responsibility with exactness. "Thou wouldest have no power at all, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

Upon this, the record says, Pilate personally sought to release him, but the Jews, perceiving his intent, let their civil and ecclesiastical charges against Jesus drop, and appealed directly to the fears of Pilate, accusing him of being no friend to Cæsar if he were to let this man go. This forces Pilate once more to make a choice between yielding to his sense of reverence or fear inspired by the calm demeanor of Jesus, or of yielding to the nearer and more material fear of a plausible accusation made against him at Rome

by these Jews. The nearer dread prevailed, and Pilate accordingly gave the command to crucify the man whom he could not save.

The particular question that now arises is: What is the measure of Pilate's responsibility for this act, or how far is it modified by the word of Jesus that "he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." In the first place we must put aside the thought that Pilate was acting as an unconscious instrument of the divine will. This would remove at once all guilt, for it is not the instrument, but the user of the instrument which alone can be charged with responsibility. If Pilate was such an instrument, so also were the chief priests, for they, no less than he, were, according to this theory, working out the divine plan. But in this case we eliminate the essential quality of crime from the whole proceeding, and the death of Jesus becomes a necessity for which he who made the necessity is alone responsible. Against this our common sense revolts, and our moral intuitions emphasize the revolution. What then does Jesus mean when he tells Pilate that he would have no power at all except it were given him from above? He means simply that the possession of authority in the civil government is not an inherent right, but that it is derived. Jesus, in answer to Pilate's claim that

he has the power of releasing and the power of crucifying, admits it. He is the lawful governor. He represents the emperor, and his decisions are ultimate. He is a legally qualified judge, and it is his unquestioned prerogative to determine the issue presented to him. All this Jesus acknowledges, and it shows him to be a loyal subject of the empire. But since judgment ought to be just, human government must be the expression of justice, or the fulfilling of the divine will. There is then a higher power to which all human rulers owe allegiance. Authority finds its whole reason for exercise in the will of God. Pilate had received his authority from above, and he had therefore a right to exercise that authority; but it was not an absolute possession, so that he might do as he pleased. He was bound by the terms of his gift to judge righteous judgment, and he himself would be judged only by this one criterion.

But it was not so with the high priest. He was the representative of a spiritual power. As an officer in the court of God he was bound to be faithful to God. Exceptional privileges had been granted him. He was the recipient of light which Pilate had never enjoyed. He had before him the evidence which proved that Jesus was the Messiah. His whole education and all the

antecedents of his life had given him a knowledge sufficient to a right understanding of the mission of Jesus. But he had refused to take advantage of these things. He had, in fact, ignored and despised them. As the chief priest of the nation and its most authoritative spiritual adviser, he was under special obligations to preserve its religious life, and maintain its spiritual independence. Whatever civil disabilities the people might be laboring under through their subjection to Rome, they were under no restraint in the development of righteousness or in the fulfilling of the law. It was the duty of the high priest to point the way to a better life, and to set an example which should make the way of the Lord clear; but he had deliberately gone back upon the work of his office, and instead of using the authority given him by God, he had appealed to a heathen power to carry out an unjust sentence upon an innocent man. Thus he was guilty of unfaithfulness toward God and of unrighteousness toward man. Pilate at least was within the lawful exercise of his power, even though he was guilty of injustice. He was entitled to the functions of a governor and judge; but the high priest was not only maliciously unjust in his prosecution of Jesus, but he was guilty of using a power not given him to the

dishonor of God and to the humiliating of his own nation. Thus he had the greater sin.

Now these two men represent certain ethical conditions which it may be well to consider.

Pilate stands for men who have a perception of what is right, and whose feelings are in favor of justice, but whose wills are weak, and consequently are overborne by the pressure of selfishness, and the desire to maintain personal advantage. They are impressed by goodness, and attracted by its loveliness, but they have no faith in it because they have no faith in themselves. They realize the oscillations of their own souls; and in the tendencies that draw them hither and thither, they think they recognize something which is inherent in all humanity. To them truth is an unattainable object, and it seems to be a sad waste when one is ready to make a sacrifice to find it or maintain it. Such men do not know what it means to be controlled by a steady impulse, or to be filled with an unceasing enthusiasm. The standard which they use is low enough to put Jesus and Barabbas on the same plane, making one a substitute for the other. This shows that their moral perceptions do not transcend the limits of feeling or emotion. They do not rise to the height of principle. They have an uncertain quality, and you are

never sure of a trustworthy response. You will find such men often standing for the right, and advocating reform, and demanding that the law be enforced, but if a concrete case comes before them and the issue of it is likely to interfere with their business or political or social prospects, they cool down or retreat behind some generality which is meaningless. Pilate, as governor, owed his position to the good-will of Tiberius, and yet theoretically he was expected to administer his office in accordance with Roman law for the benefit of the Roman nation. But the first question he asked was not, "What is right and just?" but "What will best secure my tenure of office?" Jesus advised him that this question had really nothing to do with his administration. He held his position subject to the divine will, and he was bound to carry out that will, no matter what the consequence might be. He was not bold enough to accept that advice, and his cowardly time-serving attitude has been imitated ever since. The spirit of Pilate manifests itself in men whose first thought is for themselves and their last thought for others, but they have never yet had this last thought, or if they have had it, no saving deed has grown out of it. There has been neither a willing spirit nor a vigorous flesh. Virtue in such men is almost

as much a hindrance as vice. We can only say of them that they are neither good enough nor bad enough to do the thing they try to do. Yet in the end such men send the Christ to the cross.

The men who are represented by Caiaphas are not so numerous as those represented by Pilate, but they stand for a more persistent hostility to the truth. They are equally but more consistently selfish. They plan to do evil, and their shrewd designs are masterpieces of intellectual sagacity. They keep their hate at a white heat and are constantly furnishing it with fuel. They move on step by step, and in their remorseless zeal they count every man an enemy who does not assist them, and reckon no man a friend who is not positively with them. They use all things for aid in complete indifference to their moral qualities. As Pharisees they enter into a coalition with Herodians, as Jews they join with Romans, and as men of high caste they mingle with publicans and sinners. They call to their service religion, politics, and society, being hypocrites in the first, conspirators and liars in the second, and demagogues in the third. They may be free from personal vice, but they are immoral at heart; they may be orthodox in faith, but they are miscreants in deed; they may be

respectable in sight, but they are infamous in secret. This is no picture of the imagination, but a photograph from life. If it seems overdrawn, read your New Testament, and you will find every feature emphasized in the portrait of the men who hated Jesus without a cause, and stayed not in their madness so long as he or one of his disciples lived on the earth.

But how shall we account for such depravity? A brief psychological study unfolds the reason. These were men of exceptional privileges. They were in the ranks of the elect, the chosen ones. They were born in the light. They were the inheritors of prophecy, and song, and history, and philosophy. Back of them were men who were kings and priests unto God. Into their hands were given the divine oracles. They were the children of Abraham and Moses. For them the law was written not only on tables of stone, but in their minds and hearts. They were dwellers in Jerusalem, the city of God and of the great king; they were accustomed to the temple, and its gorgeous ritual was a familiar service to them. But they had misused all these high advantages. They sinned in the light and against the light. Knowing what was the perfect law they broke it. Having a clear knowledge of their duty they refused to do it. Thus

they became rebellious. They gave themselves up to treason against the commonwealth of Israel. Now the man who hates his own country has a deeper hatred than any foreigner can have, and so the man who turns the truth of God into a lie, and goes back on the principles of his religion, if it be a good religion, will hate those principles with tremendous intensity, and he will hate with unexampled fury the man who shows him his sin. That is, he will hate him if he does not listen to him and repent. Jesus was the man divinely commissioned to set the Jews right. He came unto his own to show them their sin, and to bid them turn and live. With marvellous fulness and perspicacity he showed them the innermost secrets of their lives, and they could not help seeing the truth. This enraged them. The sermon on the Mount made a tremendous sensation. The parables he told cut them to the heart. The controversies over the healing of the paralytic and the blind man left a tingling in their ears which they could not endure. They called him names in their wrath. They said he was a Samaritan, a devil, a friend of publicans and of women of the town. They hired men to assassinate him, and then lied about it, in order to get him off his guard, and so accomplish their purpose. It was his purity, his

calmness, his unruffled temper, his uncompromising denunciation of their sin which maddened them. This anger was doubly hot for two reasons: First, his characterization of them was true; second, they knew it to be true, because they had been taught what was right long before he came among them. If you were to go into the slums and charge the dwellers there with vice and crime you would not hurt their feelings very much, because they have so small a comprehension of what sin is; but if you go into a respectable man's house and charge him with crime, if you tell him that he is a thief because he is a participator in dividends that have been obtained by robbery, or because he is the beneficiary of a fraudulent contract with the city, you will be likely to call down upon your head some wrath that blazes with blue and gold, and you may hear a suggestion that it would be well if you were put where your mouth would be forever closed.

There is no great difficulty, then, in accounting for the depravity of Caiaphas. He is not so great a monster in wickedness but that he finds his counterpart all through history. Wherever a true reformer arises and makes thorough work, a Caiaphas will surely be found, who to the mild and half-hearted interposition of weak-kneed

Pilates saying "I find no fault in him" will boldly answer: "What of it! He is not fit to live. Away with him! Crucify him!"

These two men, then, represent the chief forces of evil in this world. One is the indifferent, fairly good-hearted, selfish, partly ignorant, superstitious, cowardly, and very weak Pilate; the other the persistent, strong-minded, well educated, highly respectable, but thoroughly depraved Caiaphas, hating righteousness because of his own unrighteousness, hating sincerity because of his own insincerity, and hating purity and truth because of his own impurity and falsehood.

When such forces co-operate it does not much matter whether one has greater sin than the other. Caiaphas, though he may be the greater sinner, is the nobler character; for, while he may be the object of our hate, he will not, like Pilate, be the object of our contempt and scorn. Pilate, however, will have our pity; for we shall think of him as honestly trying, up to the measure of his prudential ability, to save Jesus from the cross. Yet the fact stands before us, that these two forces represent the antagonism that is in the world to-day to Christ and his salvation. The opposition is not doctrinal or theoretical. Neither Pilate nor Caiaphas opposed Jesus as

a philosopher or metaphysician. It was not to settle his place in the Trinity, or to complete a scheme of atonement, or to verify a method of inspiration, or to perfect a theodicy that Jesus went to the cross. Caiaphas sent him there because he was the Revealer of Sin, and also its Destroyer; and Jesus accepted his fate that he might prove that Love is the only thing in the world that can overcome hate and weakness, and open up a way of salvation so broad and perfect that in its compass it includes to the uttermost all who will look that way, even though one wear the robes and tiara of a high priest, and the other wields the sceptre and wears the crown of a Roman governor.

VII.

THE CROSS IN DEVELOPMENT.

The Christ redeemed the world by becoming himself the perfect redeemer. In his own life there was the attainment and the fulfilment of perfect righteousness. — Mulford: *The Republic of God.*

For the essence of the teaching of Jesus was that here and now, in the ordinary course of the world, and without any supernatural interference, the only real power is the power of goodness and of God . . . the disciples of Christ need not say Lo here! and Lo there! for the kingdom of God is already in the midst of them, — already present and growing in their hearts, so that they do not require to look beyond themselves for the evidences of it. Its evidence lies simply in its existence as a power that lives and develops in the spirit of man. — Prof. Edward Caird: *Evolution of Religion.*

So far as Jesus made the purpose of his Messianic work on earth as a whole refer to the establishment of the kingdom of God, and so far as he viewed his death as the final culmination of his work, He could ascribe to his death in a special sense the significance which belonged to his work as a whole, — the significance of accomplishing the establishment of the kingdom of God for the benefit of men. — Wendt: *The Teaching of Jesus.*

VII.

THE CROSS IN DEVELOPMENT.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. — JOHN XV. 13.

Then they took Jesus and led him away. And he, bearing his cross, went forth to the place called the place of the skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him. — JOHN XIX. 17, 18.

THE fact of vicarious suffering is as old as human affection, and it will remain a fact as long as human affection is potent in the affairs of this world. It would seem as if a fact which has so long been under observation, and has had so vast a number of illustrations, might be brought under some general law, so that one might give a reason for it which would be satisfactory to the logical understanding.

This has never been done. Somewhere in the act there is sure to arise a question which cannot be answered. If it be a case where one man lays

down his life for another we may be able to see the motive that prompted the act, but we cannot square the act with our notions of justice, and hence we are driven to the alternative of rejecting our notions of justice, or rejecting the righteousness of the vicarious deed. But we cannot reject our notions of justice without destroying the foundation of ethical life, nor can we forego our approval of the act of sacrifice without going back on the deepest of our moral intuitions. We are brought face to face with this antinomy every time we hear of an actual case of such sacrifice, or read the story of it in a work of fiction. The story of Sidney Carton, in Dickens's "Tale of Two Cities," seems to us an inexplicable fact. The man was an outcast, a disreputable and profligate member of a dissolute society. He fell in love with a pure woman, the wife of another man. He kept his love in his heart, and worshipped her from afar. That love burned within him until it flamed forth in a divine heroism. The husband of the woman was condemned to death by the guillotine during the Reign of Terror. He was granted a reprieve and pardoned; but before he could escape he was rearrested, retried, and condemned again. Now there was no hope for him. The sentence was to be executed on the following day. Sidney Carton

obtained access to his cell, gave him a stupefying drink, changed clothes with him, and with the aid of an accomplice succeeded in having him taken out and conveyed in safety beyond the border. He himself remained behind, and on the morrow joined the procession that led to the guillotine. His past life made him think of himself as the penitent thief who was crucified with Jesus, and he went to his death with a sublime joy in his soul, because for the sake of love he had saved another, though himself he could not save.

Now there is no possible way open to human logic by which you can make the death of this man a righteous act; and yet, in the face of that, you believe with all your heart and mind that it was acceptable in the sight of Infinite righteousness.

If Carton had propounded this question to himself: "What shall I do to be saved?" he would have said: "I must save another, and lose myself."

But while we confess our inability to answer all the questions that arise from acts of loving self-sacrifice, when we turn to the history of such deeds, we find something in them that permits us to look with equanimity upon the antinomy, and to accept them as in accordance with a reason

which is above reason, or beyond the logical understanding.

There are various elements in the conclusion to which we come, but the preponderating element is that every such sacrifice is the last resort, the culminating effort of love. It is always foreseen as a possibility, but is not ordained as inevitable. When, however, it is reached, it becomes the ratification of love, and the salvation wrought by it is the completion rather than the inception of the determined purpose.

This is the fact with regard to the death of Jesus viewed as a sacrifice on our behalf. Theology has made this sacrifice the ground of our redemption. It has asserted that before God could be gracious and pardon us it was necessary that Jesus should die, the just for the unjust. In other words it was the death of Jesus that set in motion the machinery of forgiveness, which without that death would forever stand still and inoperative. Now if this be true it seems to us that the larger part of the gospel history is comparatively valueless. For if God cannot and will not forgive us without a ransom, then, although we may be thankful to him who pays the ransom, its payment will not produce in us any thankfulness toward God, because it is not a matter of grace on his part, but only the receiving an

equivalent, or a substitute, which he reckons as a *quid pro quo*.

But we are not driven into such a position as this. The teaching of Jesus is clear on this point and must be accepted without reservation. It is this alone with which we are now to deal. Subsequent to the death of Christ various theories have been set forth to account for it and give it a place in theologic speculation. With the truth or falsity of these we have nothing to do in this discussion. The sole aim before us is to present the facts of salvation as they appeared in the mind of Jesus during his earthly ministry. Two general facts appear as the result of a review of his entire ministry. First, The whole work of Jesus as a Saviour was done under the direction and in accordance with the will of God, so that God himself is the author of deliverance from sin, and the testator of every inheritance unto eternal life. Second, There is no suggestion or hint that Jesus undertook to overcome any reluctance on the part of God to save man. Jesus nowhere affirms that he stands between man and the wrath of God, and takes the blow which vengeance is thirsting to administer. He nowhere declares that he is under the necessity of doing anything to propitiate God, or to make him willing to redeem man from bondage. On the other

hand, he clearly and unmistakably asserts that it is the will of the Heavenly Father that none should perish.

But while no necessity is laid upon Jesus to avert the wrath of God, it is nevertheless true that he comes to view his death as a necessity, so inevitable that we must affirm and believe that without the suffering of death neither his own life nor the life of his followers would be complete.

The proof of this is seen first, in the common experience which he has with all men who have stood in the forefront of reformatory and regenerative movements, and second, in the special view which he took of his death in relation to his work in life. That Jesus anticipated his death is by no means a strange or unaccountable fact. That it should take place in Jerusalem, and as the act of the religious leaders of the nation, is no more than what might be expected. He foresaw his death as other men have foreseen theirs in the midst of the most intense enmity. The fires of persecution have blazed in large centres of influence where religious domination has had most imperative sway. This fact was as apparent to Jesus as it is to us. He showed this in his lament over the sacred city: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the pro-

phets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee;" and he made it still more evident by the care which he took to preserve himself from harm when he visited the city. In the application which he made to himself of the suffering servant of God as portrayed in the second part of Isaiah, we see clearly his anticipation of the fate that would befall him if he continued his work. He needed no supernatural power of prediction to foresee this, for the history of his own people had emphasized the fact that suffering and death was the inevitable lot of the righteous man. But besides this, the world itself had admitted the truth. You will find it repeatedly expressed in the great tragedies of Greek genius; and a saying in the Republic of Plato, that "when the just man appears he will be scourged, racked, bound, have his eyes put out, and at last crucified," is so near the actual circumstances of the death of Jesus that one is almost inclined to regard it as predictive of the death of the Son of Man. In the scene of the transfiguration we get not only the anticipation but a partial reason for it. In that scene, Moses and Elias, the representatives of Law and Prophecy, appear with him, and speak of the "decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." This is a suggestive inference that his death would fulfil, complete,

and render unnecessary both Law and Prophecy, for it would complete and perfect his work, and thus its shame would be transfigured in glory.

In such sayings also as, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends," and "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," we get a view of the manner in which he conceived of his death. These passages show that he regarded it as something which would be directly beneficial to man, in that it would not only be a power of salvation, but it would be the means of raising him to a realm where his attractive influence would be enlarged from the few to the many, even to all men. This is perhaps enough to prove that he contemplated his death as a means unto an end, and while we must admit that the reality of it did not come to him without a struggle, and a deeper sense of trouble of soul than we can measure, yet it is true that on the whole he regarded it with a sublime cheerfulness, accepting it not as an awful and mysterious fate, but as the will of his Father, and furthermore as the one thing which should bring to him the full fruition of his hopes. There is no more striking instance of this latter view than the answer he made to Peter when the ambitious

and presumptuous disciple rebuked him for predicting his death. Peter said: "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." But Jesus answered, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but of men." Then turning to all the disciples he said, among other things, "For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? *for* the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works." Then he adds this significant sentence, which makes the former perfectly clear: "Verily I say unto you there be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." The saying was misunderstood then and for some time after, but it was clear enough when the cross was transfigured in glory, and salvation was proclaimed through the crucified one. The profit of Jesus which he might have gained by his earthly existence was nothing compared to that which he obtained through his death. The cross uplifted in honor was the signal, the banner carried in triumph before the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

But while Jesus anticipated the cross, he did

not from the outset assume it to be inevitable to the completion of his mission. Its inevitableness lay, not in the sphere of determinism, but in his own free and unfettered will. He did not in the beginning say "I must die in order to finish my work," but "I must fulfil the will of Him that sent me, whatever that will may be." It will be interesting to trace the progress of his work, and to note how each step was complete in itself, and yet how each step made way for further advance. In each step the ruling motive is the same, and the end aimed at is the same, but the steps are different, not as being in antagonism, but as moving along independent lines, all of which converge at last in the cross.

Starting, then, with the general assumption that Jesus came to open up the way of salvation to the world, we ask, How did he make this evident? It is perhaps difficult to make an exact chronology, but I think a fair consideration of the history of his ideas, would show us first, an improvement on the teaching of the Baptist; second, a setting forth of the character of the kingdom of heaven and a declaration that entrance therein constituted one condition of complete salvation; third, a gradual centering of the means of salvation in himself, making the

acceptance or belief in his personal words and deeds also a condition of complete salvation; fourth, a declaration of the necessity of his death as essential to the completeness of his work as a Saviour, and the illustration of this necessity in the Memorial Supper.

I will briefly go over these points.

John the Baptist was a preacher of righteousness and equity. His great mission is to announce a judgment day. His speech is strong and vigorous, but without gentleness. He thinks only of destroying the wicked, not of saving them. He expects that Jesus will be even more violent than himself. "I baptize with water," he says, "but he shall baptize you with fire."

When this man's voice is silenced, Jesus comes and calls men to repentance, not, however, that they may escape from wrath, but that they may be blessed. He offers a gospel of glad tidings. He speaks not of separating, but of uniting. He affirms that the Father's arms are open to embrace his lost children. He assumes that there is no insuperable obstacle to repentance. That any man is disqualified from it by reason of sin is entirely unknown to Jesus. He always urges men to come on their own responsibility, but he does this with perfect confidence, because salvation is already prepared for them. He says that

"the time is fulfilled." All that is essential to man's salvation is now provided, for he is the good shepherd who has come to seek and save the lost.

Now, it is evident that at this time no apprehension of danger has come to Jesus. He finds a ready and welcome hearing. If the scene in the Temple described in the early part of the Fourth Gospel is in its correct place then we must admit that he soon found that his pathway was not to be strewn with roses, but even this story yields no further result than the necessity of a wise caution in entrusting himself to those who applauded the act of cleansing the Temple.

But now his preaching begins to assume more definite shape. The death of John the Baptist opens the way for a more untrammelled speech. The need of settling controversies between them ceases. He gives full credit to the work of John, declaring him to be the greatest among men born of women, but he can plainly say, that "the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John, because the prophets and the law prophesied until John," but now the glad message, and the good tidings are to have full sway. Hence he advances to the idea of salvation as realized in the kingdom of heaven. He presents this as a present kingdom, to be realized now. The pure in heart, the

poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are already in possession of this kingdom, and there is no other condition of being in it and occupying it, than a simple childlike acceptance of it. But presently he goes on to assert that there are conditions, and he makes these far more difficult than obeying any Mosaic law. Such morality as is embodied in the middle sections of the sermon on the Mount never before had utterance. It is the loftiest ethical teaching, and almost beyond human attainment. No one ever quite succeeds in living up to it. Now these easy and hard conditions are brought together by simply taking Jesus' conception of the kingdom of heaven. It is like a merry feast, and it is like a strait and narrow way. We enter into it as little children, but as men we must take it by force. Its beginning in the human soul is like a tender plant out of a dry ground, but in its development it becomes a mighty cedar of Lebanon. Jesus recognizes the ability of the weakest and humblest to come into this kingdom, and therefore to obtain salvation even while he is in the world, and before any definite prospect of his death has appeared to him. He says he has come to call sinners to repentance, and he proves his call by making his invitation personal to them, and

also by placing before them, as the goal of their being, the highest perfection. "Be ye also perfect," he says, "even as your Father in heaven is perfect." This is the aim toward which they are to strive, and up to this time he lays stress only upon moral freedom and the kindly help of the Heavenly Father as a means of attaining this aim. He makes salvation a matter of grace, but he insists upon it that salvation involves personal righteousness, and, as this is a matter of the will, therefore he can logically say, "Except *your righteousness* exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven," and, understanding as he does the perversity, or heedlessness, or lack of perception in men, he declares that "many are called, but few are chosen." The apparent narrowness of this is offset by the story of the marriage of the king's son, where, among the multitude of guests, only one was found who had not on a wedding garment. This story shows that in the matter of choice there is a mutual co-ordination of human and divine action. The king's invitation is broad enough, but the invited guest is bound to observe the conventionalities of royal society, and if he is put out of the palace or sent away from the table as one not chosen, it is his own fault.

Now, without giving further illustrations, it

will be evident, I think, that there is a teaching of Jesus concerning admission and life in the kingdom of heaven which makes salvation completely attainable without entering upon any of those theories which have been put upon or drawn out of the cross. The question has not been raised as yet: How can God be just, and yet save the sinner? Jesus certainly has not suggested it, and yet there seems to be no lack in his idea of the sufficiency of the terms of salvation. Any man who will, may enter into the kingdom and be saved. But the essential characteristic of the gospel being good tidings, there is laid upon it the necessity of making it effective as well as sufficient. Hence we find Jesus advancing his doctrine by more definite lessons. Whether it be true or not that he perceived from the outset the necessity of connecting his own person and death with salvation, it is certainly true that he did not at first unfold this idea. He nowhere corrects himself, or intimates that any doctrine which he has taught must be abandoned, but he certainly moves on into higher and deeper realms of thought, so that a preceding view is completed in a succeeding one. I think it will be plain to every reader of the gospels that there is a decided advance in thought between the salvation which comes

through entering the kingdom of heaven as a little child and that which is wrought by being obedient to his word, and trusting to his power as manifested in the signs which he gave in evidence of his divine commission, and then again that there is a further advance when he demands that the people listen to him without signs, just as the people of Nineveh listened to the preaching of Jonah.

There is a period, not accurately marked, but still sufficiently marked to be noticeable, when he calls upon men to repent and be converted, not through the general revelation made in times past, but specifically through the word which he himself proclaims. He speaks in the first person, and insists that he himself is authority, and that his *ipse dixit* is a guarantee of the truth he utters. The first time that this consciousness makes itself apparent is in the prayer which he utters thanking his Father that these things have been hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes. Here, if we mistake not, is the genuine fruit of experience. He has begun to realize that his work is not to be successful. Opposition which found no expression in an earlier day is now lodged against him. He feels the weight of it. At first he is discouraged. The people whom he desired

to influence, turn their backs upon him, but there are others, whom in the nature of things he did not expect to touch, who appreciate his work and gladly receive it. The scribes and the sages of the land have taken offence at him, but the poor peasants of Galilee have welcomed him "for his own sake," and in this welcome he sees the hopes of the future. This thought enlarges the conception of his mission, and he confidently declares that "all things have been delivered unto him by the Father, and that only the Father knoweth the Son, and only the Son knoweth the Father," and that to the Son is therefore given the full and free revelation of the Father. Then follows that grand outburst which is the first universal invitation of Christianity and in which the messenger and the message are completely identified: "Come unto *me* all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Now it is right along at this period that we get the most emphatic assertions of the personal relation of Jesus to the salvation he has proclaimed. "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

"He that is not for me is against me." "He that heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me hath eternal life." This personal assertion continues even to the closing hours of his life. "Now are ye clean," he says to the disciples at the supper, "through the word I have spoken to you." "I am the Truth, I am the Life, I am the Way." In these and many other expressions we perceive that Jesus has passed from the general doctrine of salvation to the specific doctrine that he is himself the Saviour. There is a remarkable example of this progress of thought in the fifth and sixth chapters of the Fourth Gospel. First, he speaks of the bread of life which the Son of Man gives, which corresponds, of course, to the word that he has spoken; then he affirms: "I am the Bread of Life," that is, he makes personal communion with himself essential to salvation. Then the metaphor of the bread is expressed in the most realistic terms. "The bread which I shall give is my *flesh*, which I shall give for the life of the world." This is personal mediatorship in the highest sense. Only by eating this bread, and by assimilating it do we become partakers of the true life which knows no death. It is the bread of life of which we partake.

We are now coming to the point where we see

before us the passion and death of Jesus, and we are to consider its saving significance. You will notice, however, and I cannot too strenuously insist upon it, that there is no doubt in the mind of Jesus of the complete sufficiency of the glad tidings which he has proclaimed. Many have already come into the kingdom through his preaching. They have repented, or they have been converted, and their sins have been forgiven. They have accepted the divine conditions, and their consequent salvation is assured. They have believed his word, and they have accordingly been made clean every whit, and no suggestion has been made that they must be "washed in the blood of the Lamb." Some have found him as their personal Saviour, and made their open confession: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou alone hast the words of eternal life," and Jesus is looked upon as their living Saviour, and as having completed his work in their hearts.

For a long time, however, Jesus has been conscious of an approaching crisis. He is aware that his path is beset with enemies. Repeated schemes of assassination are disclosed to him, from which he escapes. The Pharisees, unable to contradict the popular evidence of his good works, have attributed his power to an evil spirit, going so

far as to suggest that he is in league with Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Thus on every side he is threatened with personal violence. He becomes convinced at last that the task of winning men to salvation through any of the means he has thus far used is hopeless. If his mission had been a private one, and addressed to a chosen few only, this would not much matter, but he has been sent into the world to save the world. Then he must not shrink from making the last, and greatest possible, effort. This was actually included in the surrender he made to his Father's will when he accepted the mission, but that it did not appear to him as an absolute necessity until its very near approach is evident from the prayer in the Gethsemane garden: "Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from me: All things are possible unto thee; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." The uncertainty indicated by this prayer is easily explained if we note this distinction. So far as himself was concerned, Jesus surrendered his life from the moment he began his mission, just as an officer of the government sometimes puts his resignation into the hands of the appointing power as soon as he is appointed, leaving it there to be made effective at the discretion of the appointing power, but, so far as his work was concerned, he did not know and he could not tell

whether this sacrifice would be demanded or not. He certainly began in the faith of a possibility of repentance on the part of the people through his preaching alone, and until that possibility became a practical impossibility he did not look for death as the crown of his work in saving the world. Yet that possibility was present with him from the outset, as it is present with every reformer and preacher of truth who enters upon his mission in the midst of a gainsaying and selfish community. The hatred engendered by his preaching pointed to this as the inevitable conclusion. His Messiahship was utterly at war with the sensuous notions of the great mass of the people. Yet they were attracted by the sweetness and purity of his life, and its unselfish desire and labor for their good. Thus they wavered between support and rejection of him. At times they were wild with enthusiasm on his behalf, and then they would fall away until none were left. This variation of sentiment boded no good to Jesus. It, however, drove him, not unwillingly, into closer communion with his Father. As his prospects darkened he sought oftener the solitude of the mountain for prayer. The dividing line, so far as we can trace it, between the hope of success in life and the necessity of death to accomplish his work, is the Mount of Transfiguration. Its

open declaration is in the prophetic words, "I am come to send fire on the earth," that is, the element that purifies, and "what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!"

The thought here is that the full results of his work cannot be obtained in this earthly life. This is an idea that comes frequently to the front in the closing days of his life. He tells the disciples that it is "expedient for him to go away," and he reminds them that "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." In such sayings as these we see clearly that he feels that the earthly influence of his life is limited, and that if he would fully realize himself he must be set free by death. Only in some other sphere or under some other circumstances not connected with his mortal existence can he become the effective agent in the world's salvation. It is evident, then, that he regards his death as necessary for himself, that is, he is sure that it will give him a power and influence which nothing else can secure. But this does not directly prove its necessity for us. Is there any such necessity? It must be confessed that no clear answer can be given from the words of Jesus to this question,

but a brief view of the Memorial Supper will perhaps enable us to understand that there is at least a reflective influence in his death which brings it into the category of things required for salvation. In the Institution of the Supper, Jesus used language that is somewhat difficult of interpretation. He spoke of the bread as his body, and the wine as his blood. The pictorial character of these expressions will be admitted by all except those literalists who cling to the doctrine under one form or another of the Real Presence. With this question we have nothing to do. We assume the symbolic character of the language, and regard the broken bread as a reminder of the ancient Passover. There is this difference, however. In the Passover the flesh of the lamb was used, and therefore the ceremonial was exclusive and restrictive, but in using bread at the Supper, instead of meat, Jesus represents a universal idea. Bread is food for every one. It constitutes the one essential article of diet, among all people and in all places. Therefore he took the unleavened bread of the Passover as a symbol which could be universally used. But the Lamb was the sacrifice. The Hebrews partook of it as signifying first, their exemption from death, and their deliverance from bondage, second, as furnishing them the

sustenance in the strength of which they were to go on to the promised land.

Now Jesus in offering his body under the symbol of bread desires the disciples to partake of it as signifying their accomplished release from the bondage of sin, and as that which inwardly appropriated will give them strength to go on their way. When he says to the disciples: "This is given or broken for you," he cannot mean that it is given as a means for *initiating* them into salvation, nor is it the *ground* upon which their salvation rests; for they are already disciples, and according to the category of repentance and conversion, saved men. He does not tell them that the eating of this bread is the means of removing their guilt, and furnishing a pardon, for this has been done. He does not in any way hint at a retroactive effect of his death; but he points them forward, and in bidding them "do this in remembrance" of him, he only aims at keeping himself alive in their hearts. He does not mean to abide in death, but to overcome it, and rise into unconquerable life. His death is a token of salvation to them, because in spite of his death he will not perish in death. He is to be perpetually remembered as the living Christ, and to make this sure he promises to come again and be with his followers always, even unto the consummation of the ages.

This, then, is the significance of the bread eaten in the communion. It is the bread of life, not because it originates life, not because partaking of it is the initiative condition of life, but because it sustains, nourishes, and invigorates the life which has already been initiated by repentance and regeneration. After partaking of the bread, Jesus gave them wine, saying, "This is *my* blood of the covenant," or "This is the *new* covenant in my blood." This expression, "blood of the covenant," is undoubtedly a Mosaic reminiscence. In the ancient story we are told that blood was sprinkled upon the people, not as preparatory to receiving the covenant, but after it had been formally adopted. When the people had declared "All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do," then, and not till then, was the sacrifice made, and the blood sprinkled upon the congregation. Now when Jesus says "This is *my* blood," or "This is the blood of the *new* covenant," he is certainly not speaking of a covenant yet to be, but of one already made and accepted, and for the ratification of which he offers himself as a guarantee; and the wine of which the disciples partake is the symbol of the ancient blood sprinkling, and it is to be received as the seal or pledge that God will be faithful to His promise. He has indeed already forgiven the sins of these disciples,

and He will not go back on His words; but something more is needed. The forgiven or released sinner needs the impartation of a new life, one which will enable him to hold out as he goes through the wilderness to the promised land. The people of Israel were in need of help after they had been redeemed, and so we, after our conversion, must needs be fed with the bread of life, if we would successfully meet the obstacles and hindrances of the future. But even in Old Testament times the blood was defined as life; so the blood of Jesus is in reality his life poured out for our advantage, as a sure token of the remission of sins, — a thing which God has always been glad to do, and for which he needed no other incitement than his measureless love. This life then is poured out for us, not instead of, and is received and appropriated, and when so received and appropriated is a source of spiritual strength, an assurance of forgiveness, and a pledge of reconciliation; so that we can say, as Paul afterwards said, "He who spared not his own son, but gave him up to death for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us *all things!*" Now I wish to make one statement explicit which has been implicit in all this historical review. There is no break in the gospel between the incarnation and the crucifixion. We are not given one method

of salvation up to the cross, only to find it useless when we reach that point. The life of our Lord is one consecutive life in which the vicarious element is always present, though there are developments in accordance with experience, and in accordance with the needs of men. There is a predestined goal in the sense that the way in which Jesus walked inevitably led to it, but we feel that every step of the way was the way of freedom, and the way of obedience. The preaching in Galilee, the conversations in Judæa and in Samaria are all emphasized by the cross; nay, we may even go back of this active ministry, and find in the cross the full explication of the descent of the Spirit at the time of the baptism, and earlier yet the aspiration of the divine boyhood, when in answer to the surprise of his parents he declared himself to be about his Father's business.

The one thing that gives us confidence in the doctrine of the cross as it appears in the teaching of Jesus is its complete harmony with all his life-work. Under such circumstances it does not seem to me important to frame any theory of the atonement. Such a matter may be left to scholastics, and perhaps no harm will come of it, if it only be clearly seen that any theory which posits an angry God who can only be pacified with blood, or a

Sovereign God who can be satisfied with a dramatic display of the suffering of an innocent being under the guise of a criminal, is ruled out both by moral intuitions and ethical judgment. Such a theory, or any derivative from such a theory, makes the words and deeds of Jesus in his lifetime an inconsistent medley, and throws over his last hours an impenetrable veil of mystery, and leaves us in doubt as to whether it was worth his while to take such a part in the drama of salvation. All that is precious in the self-sacrificing love of Jesus disappears when it is forced into a scheme for giving a legal satisfaction to Omnipotence.

But happily no such alternative is necessary. Above all the theories which earnest men have set forth and in which some truth undoubtedly abides, there is the one supreme fact that the cross of Christ has become a definite object of glory. Its transformation is the miracle of the ages. It is the sign of an infinite sacrifice and an infinite love. Its inscription in three languages marks the homage of Religion, of Intellect, and of Power. Jesus on the cross is the King of the world. His arms were outstretched there to receive the world. For those who have been saved by repentance and faith, and sanctified by the cleansing of the word of truth, the cross

points to a higher attainment yet, because only from the summit of Calvary can we behold the glory of the ascended Lord, and appreciate the motive which the writer to the Hebrews so clearly discerned when he bade us "run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of the faith, who *for the joy that was set before him* endured the cross, despising its shame."

VIII.

THE CROSS IN REALIZATION.

Let us beware of setting up at the cross a sort of opposition between Jesus and God. In saving the world by his sacrifice Jesus fulfils the purpose of his Father. There is nothing in his sufferings resembling a direct curse from God resting on himself. Jesus dies not as one of the lost; all he knew of hell was the diabolical hatred which nailed him to the tree. — Pressensé: *Life of Jesus the Christ.*

To the Gentiles who led Jesus to death the circumstance was but an ordinary one; to the leaders of the Jews who on the high feast of Easter delivered him to the shambles it was a festival of God and of men. But God was silent; mourning or assenting, and wherefore assenting? We can only guess. — Keim: *Jesus of Nazareth.*

There is a tragedy in the torture of the crucifixion, and it speaks to an ancient pathos in our being. There is a love in the death, and it speaks to an original tenderness in us. There is a sacrifice in it, and it speaks to the profounder laws of our nature; there is a sadness in it, and it speaks to us of the pain eternal in the universe; there is a vicariousness in it, and we see the sorrow in which divine service for us is done. It reveals the horror and mystery of our sinfulness. The death of the Divine Man finds us in these primary parts. — Peyton's *Memorabilia.*

VIII.

THE CROSS IN REALIZATION.

They took Jesus therefore; and he went out bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title also and put it on the cross. And there was written, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

This title therefore read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh unto the city. And it was written in Hebrew and in Greek and in Latin. The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not: The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written. — John xix. 17–22.

"THEY took Jesus therefore." This undoubtedly expresses the fact, but the author of the Fourth Gospel is very keen in his use of words, and knows well how to give a deep meaning to what appears as a commonplace deed.

What he really says here is, "then they received Jesus." The same word is used in the beginning of this Gospel, where the author says of the Light which was coming into the world, "He came unto his own and they that were his own received him not." Now at last his own have received him. They have received him from the hands of Pilate for death, but they have refused to receive him from God as the messenger and revealer of eternal life; they have received him that they might put him to shame and load him with obloquy, but they have refused to receive him as one who would crown them with glory and honor. There is, therefore, in this expression of John a subtle irony which we can hardly afford to lose, since it prepares the way for that more pungent irony which Pilate heaped upon them when he ordered Jesus to be placed in the midst between two thieves, and then wrote the title of royalty which he ordered to be affixed to the cross on which Jesus was fastened: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Thus Pilate takes his revenge. He gives pre-eminence to Jesus, both by act and word. He thus brings down upon them the odium of treason against their king, and forces them to make good their words, "We have no king but Cæsar;" but he knows only too well that their profession of

loyalty to Cæsar is as false as their malice toward Jesus is deep.

When they sought to take off the edge of the sarcasm by demanding a change in the wording of the title, Pilate brusquely refused. "What I have written," he said, "I have written." In his bitterness Pilate spoke better than he knew; for that title was the logical culmination of unimpeachable history, and the sure prediction of a divine evolution. That writing, evanescent as it seemed, was the essence of the most permanent fact in the world. Written on a wooden tablet and affixed to a cross, it was destined to outlive every other writing of Pilate and to be more carefully remembered than any inscription on the palaces and temples wherein he lived and moved. The threefold inscription, though made only for convenience of information, is exceedingly significant. It shows not only the fact of the condemnation of Christ, but it presents ideally the three forces that were arrayed against him, and by a strange coincidence it also shows the sources from whence the Christ derived the means of his influence, and the sphere in which that influence will be finally and universally felt.

The Hebrew inscription practically declares that there is a religious spirit which ignores and

denies the kingship of Christ, and will do its utmost in bringing him to shame and death. It asserts the authority of Judaism against Christianity. But there is another religious spirit in the world which finds the expression of its distant hope, and the fulfilment of its prophecy, in a spiritual rule whose authority is complete and perfect in Jesus of Nazareth, whom it acknowledges as the rightful King of the Jews, and the real King of men.

The Greek inscription is the voice of Intellect, embodying the spirit of Mephistopheles, the denier and doubter, which pushes its way on toward the annihilation of faith within the province of reason, and refuses to acknowledge the spiritual and the eternal; and therefore when it comes in contact with the clear truth and unequivocal mind of Jesus it finds itself out of sympathy with him, and utterly rejects him; but there is another utterance of Intellect which recognizes in Jesus the Logos, the Mind, or the Thought of God, and, desirous of finding a rational solution of the mysteries of earth and heaven, pushes its investigations fearlessly forward, being enamored of truth and loving the light. It is the impulse of aspiration, the source of inspiration, the passion to know, and to realize all that makes for the advancement of learning, and all that lifts man-

kind above the perishing brutes. As the Hebrew finds in Jesus its moral and spiritual ideal, so the Greek finds in him its intellectual ideal.

The Latin inscription gives voice to certain social instincts which tend to a lowering and levelling to a lower point yet all humanity, and these instincts rule the mob that demands with heated violence that the man who stands for social order in righteousness and purity shall be crucified. "Away with such a fellow as Jesus from the earth" is the cry of the anarchist. On the other side, however, there is in the Latin inscription the recognition of the highest social instinct as it was displayed in Jesus, whose perfect humanity consolidates and unifies the race, while at the same time it asserts unequivocally the inalienable right and duty of every man to realize himself, making "the very best of what God has made."

Now, the question which arises is, How does it happen that so much is involved in this threefold inscription? The answer is that the cross really represents all that is included in the conflict between the forces of righteousness and sin, but it is so only because this particular cross bore and was borne by one who perfectly realized all its possibilities both of shame and triumph.

I have already set before you the historical development of the cross in the life and teach-

ings of Jesus. We have seen how every incident in his life converged upon the cross as well when he was unconscious, as when he was conscious of that goal. It now remains to be seen whether in the actual endurance of the cross he maintained without a break the way of his destiny. Some general observations confirmatory of what has already been set forth will lead up to a detailed examination of this point.

On the eve of the crucifixion Jesus prayed: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son may glorify thee." Evidently then, according to this prayer, something was yet to be done. He had not yet attained; but he saw clearly the way of attainment. He was to be made perfect through suffering. The cross was the final suffering through which he must pass to reach the object of his desire. He must lose himself in order to find himself. He must save others, though he cannot save himself. But the loss sustained by a redeemer in the work of redemption is never reckoned by him as a loss. It is a gain, because whatever he parts with is something perishable, evanescent, something he cannot keep for any great length of time, or use to his own advantage, though it may seem valuable to him; but what he receives as redeemed by his sacrifice is beyond all calculation in value, and

beyond all the measure of sacrifice. It is this which puts down all theories of compensation, or substitution, or satisfaction as an explanation of the sacrifice. Great as the sacrifice may be, he who makes it gets more out of it than he would out of what he might retain were the sacrifice not made. If we speak of an infinite sacrifice we never think that the Infinite loses anything by it. The loss would be in not making it. Suppose a man were to see his friend, his wife, or his child in danger of drowning and put forth no effort to save them for fear of being drowned himself. What would his life be worth thereafter? Suppose on the other hand he made the effort, and was successful, but that in consequence of his act he succumbed to the clutch of death. If he realized for one moment only that his sacrifice had won life for them, would he reckon his own life dear unto him? Would he not rather say, "Their lives are a hundred times more precious than mine, and I count not myself a substitute as if my dying compensated their living, but I find a joy in dying which is above all price"?

Now if I read the story of the crucifixion aright, I am sure that I shall find in it this idea that Jesus was willing not to save himself in order that he might save others; and instead of thinking of himself as a costly ransom, he first

of all had regard unto the immeasurable value of what would be obtained through his death. We judge of a deed by its motive. So in judging of the sacrifice of Jesus we must find, if we can, the motive that impelled him to it. We must see why he did not take means to escape, why perhaps he did not summon in his defence those twelve legions of angels of which he once spoke. The general answer is that he was intent on carrying out his Father's will, although he prayed that if possible the cup might be removed from him. But this brings us to another question: "Why did the Father assent to this?" or putting it in stronger language, "Why did He demand it?" This we cannot fully answer. There is a mystery here which we are unable to penetrate. We can affirm without any hesitation or doubt that whatever may be the reason, it cannot be inconsistent with the love of the Father for the Son. He needed not to be placated. There was no burning wrath in Him which could be quenched only in blood, no vengeance requiring to be appeased by the punishment of an innocent victim, and no fear lest without this death His righteous government should be overthrown. On the negative side, therefore we are clear. On the positive side we have no other recourse than to admit the mystery which both warns and com-

forts us with the assurance that the divine ways are higher than the ways of men, and the divine thought superior to expression in human words.

But, taking the standpoint of Jesus, and remembering that so far as revelation can be made he is the revelation of the Father, we may find a reply satisfactory to our moral intuitions and our intellectual integrity. The motive, then, which led to the sacrifice of himself lay in the consciousness of his power to redeem men from the bondage of sin, and to make clear the way of reconciling the world unto God. I am not now trying to account for this consciousness of power, but only to emphasize its actual existence, and to present it as an undoubted fact in his life. The testimony to this is unequivocal and certain. He took the position of one who forgave sins, long before the cross appeared as inevitable. "That ye may know," he says, "that the Son of Man hath power on the earth to forgive sins." He no doubt felt a thrill of joy in giving this assurance, but the consciousness of this power received a deeper impulse when the hour dawned in which he was to "make his soul an offering for sin." It was this which brought a sublime joy to his heart. Let us not forget that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but let us not make the mistake of considering this sorrow as

an element of weakness in his character. There is a sorrow which a man nurses to the depression of his spirit, which he cultivates until it makes him morbid, and the sight of it awakens in us a sense of *pity*, which may easily turn into reproach; and there is another sorrow which a man bears with courage, and with a noble strife against its insidious pessimism, and the sight of *this* awakens in us a sense of *sympathy*, which easily turns into high commendation and profound praise, since it reveals not the weakness of the man but his strength. It is this kind of sorrow which is pre-eminent in the life of our Lord, and the bitter trouble of soul which he experienced in the last visit that he made to the Temple, and in the awful shadows of Gethsemane, emphasizes its dignity, and forecasts the spirit with which he met the torture and death of the cross. That which appears to us most certain is that when the sentence was finally passed which condemned him to suffer the most ignominious death that human ingenuity had devised, he looked upon his execution, not from the martyr's point of view, as a hard and cruel fate, but as a means, and the best means of perfecting himself, in order that he might accomplish to the full the work which had been given him to do. Of other men it is said: "They die and leave their task unfulfilled," or "The workman dies, but the work goes on."

We are not slow to admit that many a death has accomplished great things for the kingdom of righteousness. It was said of Anne du Bourg that his death made more Huguenots in one day than all the ecclesiastical tribunals of France could slay in a year. Yet we can never quite get rid of the notion that death is an interruption, a hindrance, and a sort of defeat, whenever it comes by the violence of men opposed to the truth. If there is, however, any denial of this, the whole force of the denial comes from the way in which Jesus met his death, for until he went before, showing the way, that path of glory was unknown. If the blood of the martyrs has in any way proved to be the "seed of the church," it is because the martyrs learned from him that the way of the cross is a royal way. So he made it, and so it remains and will remain.

To fully appreciate this, we must follow Jesus to the cross and listen to what he says while enduring the agony of dying. I do not know that we can fully verify all the sayings he is reported to have uttered, but the spirit of these utterances is in complete accord with all that is authentic in what precedes. The realization of the cross is what one might logically expect from its anticipation. As I look at it, the entire course of the ministry of Jesus from first to last forms

one harmonious doctrine, and no change was made in his method of securing the end for which he came into the world. Did he then perish as a victim, or did he die as the conscious Victor of the world?

We know well how he bore himself during the double trial. Neither the Sanhedrin with Caiaphas at their head as prosecutor, nor the Roman court with Pilate as judge, was able to disturb the calm serenity of his soul. Threats did not intimidate, mockery did not humiliate, and scourging did not break his spirit, or weaken his self-estimate. He spoke when speech was of any avail; he was silent when silence was more weighty than words. His bearing was that of a king who knew that no outward disgrace, no infliction of shame, could impeach his kingship. When he heard the sentence that condemned him, it was as one who reckons the world's judgment as Heaven's decree of approval. It opened to him the gate of desire. He had before said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." The barriers to that baptism were now removed, and the event for which he longed was at hand. The word was given: "Take ye him and crucify him." Then began the march to the cross. The soldiers laid upon him the instrument of torture. With

slow and painful steps he moves through the streets of the city which had been called Zion, the city of God, the habitation of the Most High. A brutal crowd surround and follow him. Women too are in the throng, but their natures are touched by his suffering, and they break forth into lamentations. The cross proves too heavy for his strength. Weakened by torture and long abstinence from food, he faints and falls beneath the load. A passer by is seized and compelled to bear the cross. The lamentations of the women are stirred afresh by this sight. Among them are those who have listened to his gracious words, and shared in his ministrations of mercy. They see how hopeless would be any attempt at rescue. So their grief manifests itself in cries of pity. But Jesus does not accept this pity. He does not ask to be delivered from this suffering, because he is conscious that it is the means whereby he will complete his mission of salvation. Not he, but they who weep and lament are the ones who need compassion. They have entirely mistaken his spirit if they think that weeping over him will aid him. So he turns and addresses them in words they will never forget: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For behold the days are coming in which *they* shall say, Blessed

are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck."

In this address there is the dignity of a conscious self-sufficiency, and also the largest self-effacement. It is the paradox of life and love. In this *via dolorosa*, he is the Anointed One, the King whose supreme rights the world challenges in vain. In his own Passion there is no evil; the evil is all in the passion of those who have inflicted the wrong. He is in fact escaping the desolation which is hastening upon them. With unhindered vision he sees what is now hidden from their eyes. The glorious city is celebrating its Paschal Feast, and the story of Israel's redemption from Egyptian bondage is being rehearsed in many a family; but in rejecting him who came to make that redemption real, the people have sold themselves into a bondage whose terms shall make them cry out unto the mountains: "Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." Here is reason for weeping compared with which his own sufferings are nought.

The significance of this passage is in its harmony with the whole course of his life. In the bold, calm, and dignified refusal to accept the pity so profusely offered we see the same inherent power which was manifested when he said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden."

It is a supreme emphasis laid on his own might to save others. If in the garden he shrank from drinking the cup, there is no shrinking now. He is fortified by his purpose, and he will go to the end and prove himself to be the source and fountain of a compassion whose contents will not be exhausted until he has seen of the travail of his soul. Animated by a supreme joy, we may think of him as under the blessing of God, but it is impossible to believe that he was under his curse.

The journey ended, the cruel work of execution begins. Soon the cross is raised aloft, the title is affixed thereto, and before his eyes his garments are distributed, as if he were already dead. It seems like the crowning indignity of all, but worse yet remains. In accordance with custom the soldiers had offered him a stupefying drink, but he had refused it. Thus his ears were open to the jibes and taunts and insults that were heaped upon him by the rulers and scribes and priests who had gathered to triumph over him in his helpless agony. But no scorn could make him forget the mission he came to perform, and what is still more important, no suffering could make him lose sight of the loving heart of God. They who tell us that the death of Jesus was necessary to remove a reluctance on God's part to forgive sinners, or to appease his vengeance, will find it

somewhat difficult, I think, to explain that prayer for these bitter enemies, who had succeeded in their evil work: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." In view of all that they had done, in view of their opportunity for knowing who he was, and why he had come to them, we find it hard to see how this plea of ignorance is valid. Yet this seems to be a reminiscence of that lament which he had once uttered over the city: "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things that belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." This blindness Jesus had recognized all through his ministry, and it had ever excited his compassion. He had sowed good seed, and some of it had fallen on the wayside, and some of it on stony ground, and so his work had failed. He had come again and again to Jerusalem, but "she knew not the time of her visitation." Therefore he seems to admit that in the blindness and sin of the times in which he came there was something inevitable, which, while it did not excuse the people, was nevertheless a reason for the exercise of divine clemency. There is a mystery in sin as well as in holiness. When we attempt to trace its origin, we find ourselves quickly involved in contradictions from which there appears to be no outlet satisfactory to the logical understanding.

Here, however, it stands as an unimpeachable fact, and we have to reckon with it, and God reckons with it. But the remarkable thing is that Jesus should make this particular plea. Yet what is it more than an exemplification of his own teaching that we should "pray for our enemies, and bless them that despitefully use us and persecute us"? Was the prayer of the sufferer answered? Luke tells us that when the awful scene was over, the multitudes who came with laughter and railing and scorn, "when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts." Was this a wave of penitence which swept over them; and did they come at last to a knowledge of what they had done, and thus prepare themselves for the forgiveness so ardently and tenderly sought on their behalf? Let us hope at least that the prayer did not utterly fail.

Luke relates another incident which lends an added force to our contention that the cross is a natural climax to the mission of Jesus, and not a thing to be considered apart from his whole life.

Pilate had ordered two robbers to be crucified with Jesus, and the soldiers had placed them one on each side of him. It cannot be doubted that this was gratifying to the Jews. They had the satisfaction at least of seeing him associated in

death with men of undoubted villainy. The record would go down that he perished with law-breakers and rebels. But a strange thing happens. The chief victim even in death does not lose his sense of victor. Even there he claims and makes good his early teaching: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." One of these malefactors seems to be in sympathy with the mocking crowd. He sees no retribution in his own suffering, and no justice in its execution. He desires nothing else than escape from penalty. "Art thou not the Christ? then save thyself and us!" This is his demand. But the other, knowing well that Jesus has never been implicated in their plots, nor a party to any evil deed, and feeling that the law has not been unrighteous in its execution of him and his comrade, reminds him that they are all under the same condemnation, "but we," he says, "indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Here then is sincere repentance, the very condition which Jesus had made of coming into the kingdom of heaven; or it was humility, or poverty of spirit, another and accompanying essential to entering the kingdom. On the basis of this confession the poor man makes his plea: "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy

kingdom." We need not discuss here the precise meaning which this robber attached to the words he used. He perhaps had seen the title placed over the cross of Jesus, or he had heard the title of king insultingly applied to him. In some sense he must have conceived of the kingship of Jesus, and felt an attraction toward him. And Jesus on his part must have felt that the assurance he once expressed of drawing all men unto him, if he should be lifted up from the earth, was in the beginning of its realization. The answer which Jesus makes to the prayer of the robber is perfectly consistent with his repeated claim of being able to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers: "Thou shalt be with me in Paradise this day." That is the promise of a king on his throne, and not of a man under the shame of condemnation, and consciously bearing the wrath of God. It is not only a word of pardon, but it is a word of restoration. For some of us who are a long time in repenting, and a long time in doing works meet for repentance, it may seem like an exceptional privilege; but instead of grumbling at it as some do, let us be glad that the poor robber so soon exchanged his terrible misery for eternal bliss. And yet let no one imitating him venture to put off the day of repentance to the last, hoping that he may then

get access to heaven; for the case of this robber stands alone in history, and furnishes at the best only a theoretical hope.

There is still another saying to which I wish to call brief attention. It affords little or no aid in explaining the motive which Jesus had in offering himself, but it shows as clearly as any other his thoughtfulness and his appreciation of past care and present love. It will always be difficult for us to take in the full measure of the relation which existed between Jesus and Mary his mother. The maternal heart, deeply immersed in the passion and mystery of motherhood, can alone enter into that sacred experience. The filial heart which has never forgotten the repose of a mother's breast, which has never swerved in its loyalty, or brought unnecessary anxiety to the mother's soul, can alone understand how Jesus loved his mother. But there have been no women who have reached the beatitude of Mary's motherhood, and no sons who have reached the stature of Jesus' filial obedience and affection. Yet every woman in whose heart exists a maternal ideal, and every man in whose breast exists an ideal of sonship, will find in the scene at the cross a wondrous revelation of this ideal. They will behold there a sorrow too deep for outward lamentation, an agony too great for audible complaint, for here

was a desolation that does not admit of description. The narrator leaves all to our imagination and contents himself with the simple declaration, a thousand-fold pathetic by its omissions, "But there were standing by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene." This is all, and nothing can be added. We do not need the music of Palestrina, or of Haydn, or of Gounod to deepen the impression made by this silence. In the answer made by Jesus to this unutterable appeal of agony we see him again forgetful of self, and anxious only to bring some comfort to that pierced heart. "When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple. Behold thy mother!"

If in the address to the robber we find an expression of conscious divinity, in this last address to his earthly friends we see the very fulness of humanity, and in the tenderness thus revealed we can only say, "Was ever mother so blessed with such a son? Was ever son so blessed with such a mother?"

It is pertinent, however, to ask whether, with such an expression on his dying lips, is it possible to believe that Jesus felt the wrath of God

abiding on him? Or that he was then undergoing a penal affliction as one guilty of the sins of the world?

There still remains for consideration four other sayings uttered on the cross. In the mean time let us think over these events in the Passion of our Lord. They will furnish food for abundant reflection, and I think that if we will pay heed to them as authoritative indications from Jesus himself of the meaning and purpose of his death, we shall find in them, not only an appeal to our moral intuitions and our reason, but also to our emotions, or religious feelings, and we shall not then wonder how the preaching of the cross was the power and the wisdom of God, and how by means of it unbelievers were touched with a mighty persuasion, and believers found in it the emphasis of their assurance that their sins were forgiven, their lives cleansed, and their souls fed by a spiritual participation in the body of Jesus given for them, and in the blood poured out for their advantage. And as our perception of this truth becomes clear, shall we not also find our salvation nearer than when we believed? I think so. We still talk about bearing our cross, and we count it as an irksome and painful and humiliating burden. But when we have once beheld its transfiguration, and seen its glory made in-

effable by the precious weight it bore when Jesus was fastened thereon, when we come to see how his suffering was not to induce a reluctant God to pardon us, but rather to make his willingness more apparent, then we may perhaps rise to the ecstasy of the great apostle who counted no joy so great as entering into the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death. The way of the cross is a royal way for a King hath traversed it. The sarcasm of his enemies is his highest encomium: "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

IX.

THE CROSS IN TRANSFIGURATION.

But we behold him, even Jesus, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor. — Heb. ii. 9.

"God has forsaken us," we say. Do we say so and not recall the words which fell in the great victory on Calvary, fell from the Conqueror's lips, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Blackness of darkness and despair, and feebleness sinking without a stay, — these are not failure. In these characters was written first the charter of our deliverance; these are the characters in which it is renewed. — Hinton: *The Mystery of Pain.*

When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. — *Te Deum Laudamus.*

One of the most striking effects produced by this picture is the sense of loneliness. You behold Christ deserted both in heaven and earth; that despair is in him which wrung forth the saddest utterance man ever made, "Why hast thou forsaken me!" Even in this extremity, however, he is still divine. The great and reverent painter has not suffered the Son of God to be merely an object of pity, though depicting him in a state so profoundly pitiful. He is as much and as visibly our Redeemer, there bound, there fainting and bleeding from the scourge, as if he sat on his throne of glory in the heavens. In this matchless picture the painter has done more towards reconciling the incongruity of Divine Omnipotence and outraged suffering Humanity, combined in one person, than the theologians ever did. — *Marble Faun.*

Thou takest not away, O Death!
Thou strikest; Absence perisheth;
Indifference is no more.
The future brightens on the sight;
For on the past has fallen a light,
That tempts us to adore.

Guesses at Truth.

Is this the Face that thrills with awe
Seraphs who veil their face above?
Is this the Face without a flaw,
The Face that is the Face of love?
Yea, this defaced, a lifeless clod,
Hath all creation's love sufficed,
Hath satisfied the love of God,
This Face, the Face of Jesus Christ.

Christina Rosetti.

IX.

THE CROSS IN TRANSFIGURATION.

It is finished. — John xix: 30.

VERY much has been written about the seven sayings on the cross, but I do not know that any better analysis of them has been made than that which Principal Fairbairn gives. He says that three of these were uttered "in the earlier stages, when the tide of life was still strong; four in the later while life was painfully ebbing away. The first concern his relations to men and the world he is leaving, the second concern his relations to God and the world he was entering. Together they show us how Christ in his supreme moment was related to God and man."

I would simply add to this that the first three sayings represent ideally the continuing self-forgetfulness of Jesus combined with a consciousness of power to fully accomplish his mission as the Messiah of God. His prayer to the Father for the forgiveness of those who are inflicting upon

him this awful misery and physical pain; his sublime promise to the penitent robber answering to the sublime faith of the man in the actual kingship of Jesus; his giving over to the beloved disciple the care of his mother, are alike in their self-effacement and in their consciousness that he can open even at that time the kingdom of heaven to all believers. He still maintains the dignity which he manifested in the trial. We see him despising the shame and yet enduring all its torture. The cross cannot impair the greatness and perfection of his divine manhood. For in accepting the inevitable it was not as one who sullenly or stoically meets a hard fate, but as one who recognizes in it a mysterious and yet sure dispensation of God. From our knowledge of his resources we are certain that he could have avoided all this suffering, and successfully defied the machinations of the priests, the scheme of the betrayer, the might of the Roman power as it was vested in Pilate, the fierceness and unreasonableness of the mob instigated by the partisan efforts of the priests and the scribes, and that even at the last moment while on the way to the cross he could have asserted himself as he once did in the Temple, and so have escaped, but this would have been a repudiation of his Messiahship, and a denial of his own principles. Such

a temporal victory would have ended in an eternal defeat. This is apparent in the first hours of the crucifixion. There is perfect acquiescence in the will of God, perfect trust in his goodness, perfect confidence that the cross is the hard but sure way to a kingdom and crown. These three sayings are not the utterance of one who deems that his cause is lost, or that it is even suffering a momentary eclipse. They are as certain in their outlook, as positive in their sense of inherent power, as those which he uttered when upon the mount of beatitudes. But how is it with the other sayings which followed these? Is there in the cry of "I thirst," and of "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" a real yielding of the kingly spirit and a surrender to a comfortless despair? Or shall we go further yet and say that this thirst and this sense of forsakenness was the result of the divine wrath poured out upon him, in order that God might be "politically" appeased, and "governmentally" or "legally" justified? This is the conclusion to which certain theological speculations lead us; but before we accept what seems so impossible let us see if there be not a more rational explanation of these utterances.

In regard to the first, I think we may take it as the natural expression of a physical condition. Jesus had been suspended upon the cross for

some hours. It is not necessary to enter into any detail of the hôrrible and ever increasing pain of this execution. The inflammation of the wounds, the checking of the flow of the blood in the extended limbs, and its congestion in heart and brain, would produce a feverishness of indescribable intensity. It was this physical suffering that extorted from him the cry, "I thirst." It is the only utterance of bodily pain that ever escaped his lips, and it seems to have aroused the sympathy of some that stood by, for in answer they took a sponge and dipped it in the common sour wine of the country, and placing it on a branch of hyssop, they put it to his mouth. He did not refuse it, as he had before refused the narcotic which was first offered him. It may be that he felt the kindliness of the motive that prompted the act, and took it as the last favor that could bestowed upon him. Yet in taking it he fulfilled an ancient description of the suffering servant of God, as written in the 69th Psalm: "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." It need hardly be said, that this was done in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, but the writer of this Gospel, steeped as he was in the knowledge of the Old Testament, is right in finding in this and other coincidences the historic fulfilment of the prophetic ideal. It is, however,

the next utterance that demands our most serious consideration. In this cry which is a quotation from the twenty-second Psalm, did Jesus mean to express the position which God had taken toward him, or was it the utterance of his own feeling toward God?

In answering this, we must abide by the constant and unchanging teaching of Jesus respecting God. He had told his disciples in the early part of his ministry that God cared for His children with a peculiar care. "Not a sparrow," he said, "falls to the ground without your Father's notice," and even "the hairs of your head are all numbered." He had told them to give no anxious thought to the future, for God, who cared for the birds of the air and the grass of the field, would certainly not fail in his protection of them. Through all his ministry he taught, and never ceased to teach, that which the apostle John afterwards embodied in a concise and all embracing definition, "God is love." As regards himself, he had affirmed that he had come a messenger of salvation into the world, by the commandment of God. All that he did was done by the divine ordering. "I can do nothing of myself," he said, "but what the Father telleth me that I do." Every moment of his life he was conscious of the divine presence. Every act of his life was

an act of God. It was God who had sent him into Galilee, and God who had sent him to Jerusalem. The whole of his going, from the Incarnation, was the prescribed pathway of the divine will. Nay, in the ecstasy of his union with God, in the fulness of his willingness to be obedient, he declared that "for this cause I came into the world," as one who had left a region of glory for a place of humiliation. It was God who had directed him to Gethsemane, and the trial before Caiaphas, and also before Pilate. It was God who had bidden him bear the cross and be borne on it. If then it was the divine will that he should be sacrificed, no place is left for the divine wrath toward him, unless the doing of the divine will is a reason for the exercise of the divine wrath. Such a supposition, however, is contrary to all the facts.

But did he himself succumb to the feeling that God had departed from him? If he did not, then this is no real expression, but only a make-believe. But we cannot tolerate a make-believe on his part, any more than we can on God's part. If this is an acted tragedy and not a real one, then it is the worst thing that ever happened in this world. But I think that we can understand its reality if we look at it in the light of facts. Nothing is more certain than that while he made use of extraordinary power in behalf of others he never

made use of it for himself. For all men he was more than man, for himself he was always less than for others. He gave release to men bound with devilish chains, but he would not loosen himself from the bonds which held him to suffering and death. Taking upon himself the common lot of man, he would do nothing that might lift him above that which is incident to every man. Hence we feel that in the hour of mortal agony he bore what all men must bear, the sense of desolation, the fear which underlies every hope, the pain of parting from loved ones, the dread of darkness and the ruthless separation from all the desires, ambitions, and aspirations of life. Now if this had been left out of the experience of Jesus he would not have been what he was, the complete expression of humanity. This despairing cry: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me!" uttered in the extremity of his suffering, is just that which identifies him perfectly with humanity, and forever disposes of that heresy which maintains that the human life of Jesus was only a mere semblance and not a real and veritable thing.

But we find a still deeper reason for this cry when we come to consider the purpose for which Jesus came. It was his mission to deliver men from sin, to set them free from its bondage, and

to give them assurance of pardon, and reconciliation, and sanctification. That such a mission should be disregarded, and that the messenger himself should meet with such a fate, must have been a tremendous trial to faith, but if one may speak comparatively on this subject, it must have been a still greater trial to his love. God's love for the world had sent him to the world that men might not perish but have everlasting life. His own love was immeasurable, and he had built upon it as the one thing that should save the world. But this love had been rejected. The rejection of this love deepened his sense of the power of sin, and as that deepened it would naturally increase his hopelessness of the rescue he had attempted. It must not be forgotten here how much that rescue contemplated; it was not simply to make men better, it was to make them good. It was not content with an outward reformation, but it looked to an inward regeneration. He had made himself the standard. He had bidden men to follow him, to come to him, to accept his words, to take to themselves his own life, to feed upon him, and to grow up into him. Now it seemed as if between his actual success and his goal there was all the measureless extent that there is between failure and attainment. He had done his part, but the prince

of this world had been too much for him, and now he was entering into death, and it may be that to him as to others who have experienced the first pangs of death there came in an instant the flash which lightened and revealed the whole of his life and all that he had done, and he saw then the utter inutility of what he had wrought, for if now and then he had cast out some devils, what was this in comparison with the power of hell which was now triumphing over him? Had he in any way broken the reigning power of sin, had he prevented the enemy from sowing tares, and reaping a harvest of evil? Had he not rather provoked a greater evil and put mankind under a heavier guilt, for if he had not come, would they have had sin?

I know that it may seem vain thus to look into the mind of Christ, but our own experiences point to some such revelation. We know that in proportion to the purity of our motives is our humiliation in case of failure. To fail when we have done the best we can, is an evidence of two things: our own weakness and the strength of the opposition which has been made to our endeavor. One would be slow in applying this test to Jesus, but Paul distinctly tells us that "he was crucified through weakness," and I really see no other explanation of this despairing

cry than that it was the utterance of his own sense of weakness, though I do not believe that even then he wholly let go of the divine hand, for his cry is not addressed to an abstraction, but to a living personal Being with whom he still holds definite relations. It is "My God, my God" to whom he appeals. No sense of being forsaken, however deep that sense may be, can involve a complete cutting off, so long as the feeling of personal possession still remains. If in this cry we recognize a remembrance of the twenty-second Psalm we may well believe that even this cry of despair did not wholly blot out another sentiment in the same psalm, "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him he heard him." Reckoning, however, at its fullest extent the despair which may have filled the mind of Jesus in this moment of torture, we cannot believe that God turned a deaf ear toward him, or that for a single instant he looked with wrath upon his well-beloved Son, or that in any sense he conceded that he was a sinner justly suffering a penalty in the sinner's stead.

Whether this idea subsequently derived from a consideration of the death of Jesus is true or not has no place in this discussion. It certainly

does not appear as a legitimate inference from anything in the historical record.

The lesson that grows out of this agonizing cry needs no such interpretation for its justification. It is enough for us to know that Jesus was not exempt from the deepest pang that can rive a human heart, and that in that exceeding sorrow God was still faithful to him. For the divine mercy made the anguish short. The awful gloom was dispelled. In the dense darkness a light shone resplendent and clear. Though he was going through the valley of the shadow of death God was with him. His Father would not forsake him. When the bitter cry burst from his lips there was straightway an answer, and immediately the full vision of his everlasting and uninterrupted love was restored to the sufferer.

The full statement of this fact was made afterwards by the unknown writer of the letter to the Hebrews in a passage of wonderful significance.

Representing Jesus as a priest, not after the temporary order of Aaron, but after the eternal and ideal order of Melchisedec, he speaks of him as one "who in the days of his flesh offered up prayers, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and *having been heard for his godly fear,* though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he

suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all that obey him the author of eternal salvation."

The answer which God made to that cry of despair is involved in the next word which Jesus uttered: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." This is sublime trust; it shows how transitory was his despair, how eternal was his hope. In that word the light of the divine countenance illumines the face of Jesus and we can almost see the smile with which he departs, hastening to the glory which he feels is prepared for him. Now he can say with perfect truth, "It is finished." God has indeed not forsaken him; nay, he has given him assurance that his death is no failure, but it is the consummation of his work, the seal that evidences all that goes before, and assures us that he, in giving his soul an offering for sin, will surely see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. When Jesus bowed his head and gave up the ghost the work of sacrifice was done; the last requirement laid upon him in his incarnation within the realm of the physical world was fulfilled, the supreme act of obedience was completed, and the way of reaching man's highest destiny was completely exemplified. Some further light is shed upon this act of self-sacrificing love by the letters of Paul, and Peter, and John,

but it is a light which intensifies the fundamental principles which have already been enunciated, without giving a different view, and above all, not a contradictory view of what has been presented.

In these letters we find such terms as atonement, reconciliation, propitiation, and justification frequently used, but all these terms contain no more than the corresponding terms used by Jesus, such as conversion, repentance, forgiveness, and sanctification. The only difference is that the former have an apparently forensic atmosphere, while the latter have a spiritual atmosphere; the former are used in technical theologic speculation, while the latter are employed in practical religious instruction, exhortation, and edification. They all have their right places, and we cannot well do without them; but it is evident that in considering the actual teaching of our Lord, and in setting forth only what he himself has endorsed in speech and act, we must limit ourselves to the record of his life and teaching. And this is what I have attempted to do. I have sought to present the Trial and the Condemnation and Death of Jesus in the light which fell upon these things at the time they were enacted. I have not been wholly successful because one cannot free himself entirely from subjective influences, but I shall be well content if I have fairly impressed upon you

the purpose I have had in view. I have been desirous to give force to a common expression, but a weighty one, "to get back to Christ." I am aware that the idea involved in this expression has been greatly criticised because it has seemed to reflect on all subsequent theology; but I apprehend that the theology which cannot rest upon this foundation will prove to be evanescent in spite of its antiquity, and that the new theology, if it should be found standing upon the life and words of the Son of Man, will more than justify itself to the antiquarian, as having not only a hopeful and enduring future, but a past which is immutable, since it is the occasion "of removing those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." In concluding this series of sermons I will not in formal terms recapitulate what I have attempted to say, but will endeavor to set forth briefly the general underlying thought which has governed them.

The mission of Jesus is based upon the assumption that man is alienated from God by wicked works, and is in a state of insubordination to law. He is therefore bound to reap what he has sowed. But this alienation, whatever may be its origin, continues because he has no right conception of God, and no appreciation of the

real benefits arising from a loyal and free-hearted obedience. Jesus on coming into the world meets this fact. He sees humanity sick unto death. He sees men scattered as sheep without a shepherd, the prey of ravening wolves and dogs. He sees them bound with the fetters of sin, and in the grasp of an evil tyrant. He sees them filled with pride, hypocrisy, avarice, and lust. He sees them burdened with poverty, and ground beneath the heel of the oppressor. The world is sadly out of joint. There is no efficient remedy for the diseases of the soul or the disasters of the mind. Self sits on the throne of the world, and that throne is the centre of anarchy, and the source of a corruption which is manifold in its power of reproduction. It was a loveless world, and, so far as any right conception is concerned, it was a Godless world. The three national forces with which Jesus came in contact when he began his ministry were all of them going from bad to worse. There was no love in the Jewish commonwealth, no faith in the Roman empire, and no hope in the Greek community. The prophets of Israel had ceased to speak, and their ancient teachings were practically discarded. The name of Moses even only served as a rallying cry for a partisan spirit. The gods of Rome had faded into myths without

meaning and fables without a moral. The oracles of Greece were dumb or served only as subjects of a comedy of errors. Over all the world there was a nominal peace, but it was a peace in which there was no true prosperity. The gates of the temple of Janus were shut, but the gates of the fortress of Giant Despair were wide open. Even the little children in the market-places found amusement in the gruesome play at funerals and waxed wrathy over the failure of their companions to properly respond to their lamentations, and when tired of this they made sport of marriage, reckoning it at no higher value than a game to be played. Religion at that time manifested itself in torn garments, in pretended fastings, and disfiguration of the countenance, or in elaborate ritual, and hollow though splendid ceremonialism. Politics was a game played with concealed daggers, and carried on by bands of conspirators. Society, from the court of the emperor down to the peasant's hut, was marked by utter disregard of every sacred relation. The virgin of Israel had taken her place beside the meretrices of Rome, and the hetaerae of Greece. At social banquets the inconvenient guest was disposed of with poisoned wine, and his death was looked upon as a practical joke. The old days when men believed in immortality and in righteousness

of conduct had long passed away, and friends marked the tombstones of their dead with cheap witicisms or rollicking verses.

In the Greco-Roman world the pauper was despised and treated with barbarity or unsympathizing charity, and the most religious sect of the Jews did not hesitate to rob the widow and the orphan, and cover the deed with an orthodox creed.

This was the world to which Jesus came, and although he did not perhaps meet with all this vileness in its outward forms, it was in the atmosphere he breathed, and no just conception of his mission can be obtained, and no vindication of his method can be complete without taking this into account. The world was against him from the very start. In its wisdom it had declared that man could only attain the goal of his desire by following the inclinations of the flesh and living to self alone. Against this principle Jesus set the principle of his life. He taught that man could arrive at his highest destiny only through suffering, and in order to establish this proposition and give it practical effect, he gave his own life. He predicated the transfiguration of life on the transfiguration of the cross. By virtue of his sonship as a pure and sinless man, he had the right of way to God without hindrance or im-

pediment; but he voluntarily took the way that sinful man must go, in order that this way might be open to all. But if a sinless man means one incapable of sinning and incapable of progress in spiritual life, then his course was of no value to us. That conception of him is ruled out, however, both by the record of his experience, and the fact that he has satisfied the need of men. We accept without hesitation and as a full explanation of his consciousness the implications involved in the declarations of Paul that "he was born under the law, and of the seed of David, according to the flesh."

Being thus born he "learned obedience," not in any unreal way, not in any way of inevitable and invincible necessity, but by a free choosing to do always his Father's will as it was made known to him from day to day, and by thus making a true advance "in favor with God" this lesson of obedience was thoroughly learned and completed without the need of review in the self-surrender of his life upon the cross.

The cross therefore was not the one act of obedience, nor indeed the chief act of obedience, which made him the well beloved in whom God was well pleased, but it was the crowning act of a series which had lasted all his life long, and in every one of which the principle of self-sacrifice

and self-realization were alike included. This perfect and indefectible obedience is the evidence of his absolute oneness with God his Father. But while this establishes his relation to God, it does not show his relation to man. For that we have to look elsewhere, as we think, and yet, strange to say, we find it right here.

In that remarkable prayer which is recorded alone in the Fourth Gospel, and which certainly contains a true reflection of Jesus' thought, even if it is not a verbal report, we read, "For their sakes," that is, for their advantage, "I sanctify myself." This sanctification as is evident from the form of the expression is not one solitary act, but a continued act or well established habit. Jesus had all along been consecrating himself, but he now repeats the declaration in view of his approaching death, since the idea of dying is undoubtedly involved in the meaning of sanctify. The special point to be noticed is the effect which he says this sanctifying will produce. We might naturally expect that he would say that he would put redemption, or salvation, in apposition with "for their sakes;" but no, it is that "they may be sanctified in the truth." Of course the word "sanctify" means the same in both parts of the expression. If Jesus does not mean that he cleanses himself from guilt by sanctifying him-

self, neither can he mean that his act of sanctifying will cleanse these disciples from guilt, to the end that they may come into the truth. But if he means that by sanctifying himself he completes his self-surrender in death, then in doing this for the sake of the disciples he expects that they who are already disciples will find in his death an inspiration to a purer and more devoted life than they have yet attained unto. In other words, they will be induced by his example to so consecrate themselves to the truth, that for them the cross will in time have no terrors.

He has assured them that they are already "clean every whit," but his death will complete the work which he as a teacher, has begun in them. How? Because they will see that by his incomparable obedience he has himself become perfect through suffering, and thus by showing them that his obedience was not an irresistible grace, but an act requiring a determined will as well as a loyal affection, they also may find in the sore disciplines of life the development of a power which may be brought more completely into the service of God, and so advance them to a higher degree in the divine likeness.

The transfiguration of the cross, then, was worked out wholly in the sphere of human experience. From the beginning to the end it is

the suffering of a man that we witness. His weariness, his thirst, his loneliness, his disappointments, his sadness at the unbelief of the Jews, his misery on account of their sins, his bearing of their revilings, and curses, and causeless hate, his bitter trouble of soul before Gethsemane, his passion in the garden, his heart-break over the betrayal, his humiliation before Caiaphas and Pilate, and his long physical and mental agony on the cross, are all experiences which came to him as a man, and in which he got no other help than that which any man may get, and which he bore with the same human infirmity which belongs to all men, though in his case it was without sin. Take away this fact, and you take away all that makes his sufferings of any avail to us. Let the fact come out in its fulness, and bear in mind the purpose of the suffering, and you will get his interpretation of it, as a divine discipline, and because of the result, as a succession of opportunities for the realization of the glory that endureth forever. This, then, is the summing up of the reasons for the cross. It is the highest example of conformity to the divine will. It is the maximum of obedience. It is the highest possible affirmation that God's will is best, whatever may betide, and that this will is fundamentally, in spite of what may seem to the

contrary, a will with infinite love back of it. Nothing but conformity to this loving will can bring peace or joy to our souls. Men sometimes say that the gospel of good news is the remission of the punishment of our sins. It is not that. The true gospel is that sin will be punished, and that no man can escape it. The desideratum then is not the removal of punishment but the removal of sin. But sin can be removed only through the "expulsive power of a new affection." Jesus awakens that affection, and gives it force by what he has done and suffered for our advantage. He proves the constancy of the divine love. In dying he manifests the ardor of his purpose to fulfil all the will of God. As in all his ministry he sets forth the compassion of God to the world, so even in death he continues that ministry. He reveals to the world the fulness of God, because he is the Son of God, and because God is in him, speaks through him, acts by him, as the Word that became flesh. Not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give his life as a ransom for all the world, past, present, and to come, is the unchanging design for which he came into the world. He never loses sight of this object. He never surrenders his purpose, though he surrenders himself. On the cross he is confident that God will hear him as he prays

for the forgiveness of those who know not what they do. There is faith that cannot be quenched. There, too, he still claims his crown rights as Immanuel. With undiminished majesty and undoubting authority he opens the kingdom of heaven to the penitent robber, and offers a place with him that very day.

There also he remembers with tender compassion the sorrows of his mother, and offers her the best comfort earth can afford, and then he sinks beneath the pain of physical distress and spiritual desolation, only to rise into the arms of the Father who has never forsaken him, and to assert the victory of Love in the final outgoing of his life. We will not belittle that death by calling it heroic; it is too sublime for human praise; it is too significant to be measured as one measures the death of a warrior or a martyr. It has accomplished in full and for all the world what other deaths have accomplished only in part and for a few. By it he was himself perfected, and by it he opened the way to perfection for all who will follow in his footsteps. By it he testified to the validity of his divine commission as the captain of our salvation, and became forevermore not only the Christ of consolation, but the Christ of consummation. By it he finished the work of redemption, and completed the circle of reconcili-

ation, in giving us an unobstructed access to the Father, and removing every excuse for continued rebellion in our sin-corrupted and obstinate wills. It is this that transfigures the cross and casts over it a sublime halo whose radiance shall never fade or grow dim. In the optimism of the ancient psalmist we behold the purpose for which man was created. Made lower than the angels he was crowned with glory and honor, and set over the works of the hands of God, all things being put in subjection under his feet. To the writer of the letter to the Hebrews this consummation has not been reached. Man has not attained unto perfect dominion. "But now," he says, "we see not yet all things subjected to him; nevertheless we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace (not the wrath of God) he should taste death for every man. For it was becoming in God, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Science directs us, and directs us truly, to consider the destiny of man in the light of his origin. Religion, as taught by Jesus, bids us consider no less earnestly the destiny of man fulfilled by Christ through suffer-

ing. Both these views are true. They blend in the light of the transfigured cross.

Humanity, represented in Christ, fulfilled all the conditions of a perfect Divineness. To him, and him alone, can man look with any hope of success for the redemption from sin and the new birth which initiates the "stature of the finished man." The cross points the way

> "To wounded feet that shrink and bleed,
> But press and climb the narrow way, —
> The same old way our own must step,
> Forever, yesterday, today."

And because it was the Son of Man who died on the cross we are sure

> "That soul can be what soul hath been
> And feet can tread where feet have trod,
> Enough, to know that once the clay
> Hath worn the features of the God."

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